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# Conversion Rate Optimization Report 2016

In association with  
**RedEye**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

This is Econsultancy's eighth **Conversion Rate Optimization Report**, in association with **RedEye**.

The research, based on an online survey of nearly 900 client-side and supply-side digital marketers and ecommerce professionals, looks at the types of conversion strategies and tactics organizations are using, in addition to the tools and processes employed for improving conversion rates. As well as touching on the use and impact of personalization, the research covers different areas of best practice and identifies methods and techniques which are most valuable for improving conversion rates.

The aim is to provide data and a framework to help companies invest their time and resources as effectively as possible, by examining which methods and processes are most likely to yield results.

## The six key factors contributing to CRO success

The research revealed the following **key factors** contributing to improvement in and increased satisfaction with conversion rates:

- 73% of those that increased their CRO budget saw improved conversion rates, a clear correlation between investment and results.
- 84% of companies with a structured approach have seen improvements in conversion rates, while that same figure for those without a structured approach is just 64%.
- The combination of CRO methods that deliver the highest overall improvement in conversion rates is segmentation, usability testing and A/B testing.
- The most satisfied respondents are those running three tests per month, running frequent tests and running complex tests.
- An interesting outlier is the hardcore CRO guys, those that are using nine or more different methods, who are the most satisfied with conversion rates.
- While there is an increase in the proportion of those doing three or more tests, when you

correlate this to results, those doing lots of tests are seeing their results either reduce or the satisfaction levels drop dramatically.

## Strategy has started to pay dividends, but resourcing deficiencies impede progress

There's increasing evidence that conversion rate optimization (CRO) is seen as an essential practice within marketers' toolkit, with over half (55%, up from 53% in 2015) of companies surveyed deeming it as 'crucial' to their overall digital marketing strategies and a further third ranking it as 'important'.

Encouragingly, organizations are more likely to give their optimization strategy the attention it deserves in their bid to improve conversion rates, potentially because they've already experienced the benefits of developing a strategic plan instead of relying on guesswork.

Compared to last year, organizations are 20% less likely to cite 'lack of strategy' as a significant barrier to improving conversion rates. It's also worth noting that organizations are more likely to adopt a structured approach to CRO than at any time since the launch of our inaugural survey in 2009 (35%, up from 33% in 2015).

Despite this strategic focus, resourcing deficiencies loom large. While there has been a 43% increase in the proportion of companies that have one person directly responsible for improving conversion rates, respondents are less likely to have more than one person responsible for this in-house (41% compared to 46% in 2015).

Ever since 2009, 'lack of resources' has been consistently ranked as the most significant barrier to improving conversion rates and this year is no exception. Additionally, the proportion of those saying that's the case increased by 16% since last year.

Perhaps more worryingly, the proportion of those who are either 'quite' or 'very' dissatisfied with their conversion rates has increased by 8% since last year, suggesting that resourcing issues might

restrict companies' ability to take full advantage of CRO opportunities. Seven in ten (71%, down from 73%) companies have seen their conversion rates improve over the last 12 months and 72% have witnessed a 'significant' or 'small' increase in sales conversions since 2015.

### **Regular testing is the foundation of a successful CRO programme**

A/B and multivariate testing have emerged as two of the most valuable methods for improving conversion rates, with over half (60% and 53% respectively) of responding companies deeming these types of testing as 'highly valuable'. Since 2009, the proportion of those saying that's the case has increased by 13% and 10% respectively.

The research also revealed an increase in testing frequency: compared to last year, companies are 11% more likely to say that they run tests at least three times each month, with the proportion of those running between three and five tests increasing by 22%.

On a practical level, a successful testing programme is not only dependent on regular testing, but also on having a robust ability to handle tests across the full spectrum of sophistication, from simple A/B tests to complex multivariate experiments. While there's definitely room for improvement, it seems that many organizations have the basic requirements in place to handle tests of varied complexity. 'Highly complex' tests are run frequently by less than one in ten companies (7%), but 64% do use them to some extent. Tests of 'medium complexity' are used at least occasionally by 69% of respondents.

Organizations adopting a more sophisticated testing programme are reaping the rewards, as 36% of those carrying out frequent 'complex' or 'highly complex' tests report that they are satisfied (either 'very' or 'quite') with their conversion rates. This compares to only 22% of those who rarely or never run complex tests.

Additionally, companies that frequently run 'complex' or 'highly complex' tests are more than twice as likely to experience a 'significant increase' in sale as those who rarely or never run these types of tests (39% compared to 16%).

### **The opportunity of delivering effective personalization at scale**

Ever more sophisticated technologies are set to make personalization more accessible, helping a growing number of companies gain an edge over their competitors. While the proportion of those using personalization has slightly declined since 2015, organizations are 6% more likely to say that they are engaging in some form of personalization compared to 2014, when we first asked this question.

The value of using personalization to improve conversion rates is widely recognized, as nearly six in ten (56%) companies surveyed consider website personalization to be a 'highly valuable' method for improving conversion rates, with an additional 40% rating it as 'quite valuable'. Additionally, compared to 2015, this method was deemed 'highly valuable' by 22% more organizations. Although only a quarter of those surveyed currently use website personalization to improve conversion rates, more than half (55%) plan to implement it.

However, increased value recognition doesn't mean that personalization is no longer fraught with challenges. It has remained the most difficult method to implement for improving conversion rates, with 34% of companies rating it 'very difficult' – 70% more than the second most difficult method, multivariate testing. Encouragingly, the proportion of those rating it as 'very difficult' has declined by 13% over the last two years.

Turning fragmented data into actionable insights is a key success factor when aiming to deliver effective personalization at scale and there are promising signs that companies are moving in the right direction. Compared to last year, both companies and agencies are more likely to say they (or their clients) have a defined strategy or process for collecting customer data which can later be used for personalization (up by 4% and 12% respectively).

Putting the customer front and centre is a prerequisite of personalization and it's encouraging to see that compared to last year, companies are 23% more likely to use customer engagement data when devising personalized experiences. This combines the two elements needed to reach success with a personalization strategy: the segments for which you want to personalize and the experience that you are personalizing.



## 1.1. Methodology

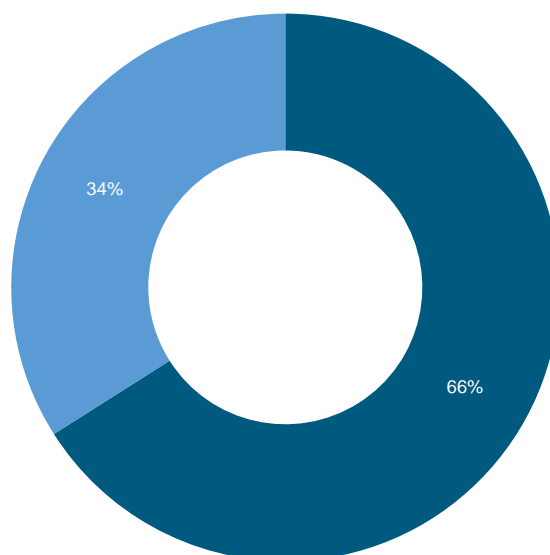
This is Econsultancy's eighth **Conversion Rate Optimization Report** carried out in association with RedEye. There were nearly 900 respondents to our research request, which took the form of an online survey fielded in August 2016.

Information about the survey, including the link, was emailed to Econsultancy's user base and promoted online via Twitter and other channels. The incentive for taking part was access to a free copy of this report just before its publication on the Econsultancy website.

Two-thirds (66%) of survey respondents work for client-side organizations who are trying to improve their conversion rates, while 34% work for agencies, vendors or specialist consultancies. For a more detailed profiling of respondents, see *Section 5*.

If you have any questions about the research, please email Econsultancy's Research Director, Jim Clark ([jim.clark@econsultancy.com](mailto:jim.clark@econsultancy.com)).

**Figure 1: Which of the following most accurately describes your job role?**



- Part of an organization which wants to improve its conversion rates (client-side)
- Agency, vendor or consultant helping companies to improve conversion rates (supply-side)

Respondents: 889



## 2. INTRODUCTION BY REDEYE



**Garry Lee**  
CEO, RedEye



**CRO is moving to the next level, whether that is in the investment it attracts, the complexity being employed or the number of different techniques and tools being used.**

### **CRO comes of age**

This is the eighth straight year we have sponsored the CRO report and when this started it was all about understanding how well CRO was becoming part of digital and marketing teams, as it was still a relatively new concept. We have all grown up since 2009 and no-one more than CRO itself. All the evidence in this report highlights how CRO is moving to the next level, whether that is in the investment it attracts, the complexity now being employed or the number of different techniques and tools now being used.

### **Increased investment but still lacking people**

Investment into CRO is at an all-time high, with 72% of respondents saying investment will increase by up to 30% this year and in total only 3% saying they will reduce CRO budgets. But the really good news is that our analysis shows that 73% of those that have increased budgets have seen improved conversion rates – a clear correlation between investment and increased results.

The only real downside for me is that we are still seeing a lack of resource as the biggest barrier to success. When you consider the increased investment, one has to conclude that companies are struggling to find the right people, so there is surely a time now for more courses and training in this key growing digital field. Companies need to start getting creative with how they recruit, with one area we recommend to people being looking at people in similar fields that can be converted over to the CRO cause.

### **Perfect combination**

As budgets increase, more is expected from those of us in the CRO industry, which is leading to more and more complexity, but interestingly for the first time in a long time, that doesn't also mean more tests. The results support the evidence I've been seeing with clients for some time, that people cannot keep up with hundreds of small tests that have very small gains and instead are focused on how to make impactful tests work. The analysis actually shows that the best combination to drive



improved conversion rates is running three tests per month and making them complex tests. The investment into CRO is putting pressure on CRO practitioners to deliver impactful tests with eye-catching results.

### A methodology that works

Although people sometimes get lost in a world of A/B testing, it's important to remember CRO is a lot more than that and the results from this year's report show that more than ever, as we are seeing six other methods with over 80% of respondents saying they will use these methods in the next 12 months. Our analysis shows that methods like usability testing and competitor benchmarking are all ranking higher in effectiveness at increasing conversion rates than A/B testing.

However, it's not just about which individual method works, but what combination of CRO methods to use. One method alone will not provide the silver bullet, a strategy that utilizes multiple techniques will provide the best outcome. Interestingly, the optimum combination of CRO methods that gives the highest increase in conversion rates is A/B testing, segmentation and usability testing. If you think logically about this, it makes a lot of sense. As people are driving towards more complex and impactful tests, the focus of those tests needs to be greater, so using qualitative data to optimise and focus the tests will be key, something you get from good usability testing. Talk of segmentation being critical in the CRO arsenal naturally leads to the other method that leans heavily on data and segmentation, and that is personalization...

### Web personalization

Is it finally time for web personalization to fulfil its potential? Whilst it is still seen as the most difficult method to implement, it has improved to being considered the third most valuable CRO method, so for those that are getting web personalization going it has been worth the effort. Hopefully more people will see this impact and start to invest the time and money into people and data that are key to driving web personalization. Everything we have seen in 2016 from clients that have managed to get a proper web personalization strategy live has showed that the results have more than justified the investment.

### Time to be brave

If there is one key message and conclusion to the report this year, it's about being brave. Continue to invest, be prepared to run more complex and impactful tests, whilst all the time looking at how we can attract more and more good people into the sector. Those that are prepared to do these things are the ones stealing a march on competitors and making CRO work for them. As I said at the beginning, CRO is coming of age finally and those treating it like a grown-up sector are the ones seeing the best results.

### 3. CONVERSION MATURITY MODEL

The Conversion Maturity Model has been refreshed for this year's report to reflect the increasing complexity of the tools and techniques being utilized for conversion rate optimization.

The survey data was used to create natural segments of respondents with similar approaches to conversion.

Companies at the 'foundation' stage are covering the basics; running one or two simple tests a month using the most straightforward methods. Without any dedicated resource it is difficult to have a structured approach and to get changes implemented.

The 'intermediate' group know what best practice looks like and are striving to achieve it: a structured approach, multiple conversion personnel and running multiple tests per month, including some complex tests. They will be adding more sophisticated techniques to their testing arsenal,

including segmentation, website personalization or usability testing (although not yet combining all three). They have also realised the necessity of consistency across channels and will be starting to align their website personalization and email marketing strategies.

Businesses in the 'expert' segment are constantly pushing for improvements, not satisfied with what has already been achieved. They have already picked off the 'quick wins' and are unafraid to run increasingly complex tests on a regular basis to stay ahead of the competition. They are combining usability testing and segmentation with the easier testing methods and have a number of areas of website personalization under their belt.

This roadmap will allow companies to identify where they currently are on their conversion rate optimization journey and recognise key areas of focus in order to improve their current practices.

	Foundation	Intermediate	Expert
Structure	Not using a structured approach to improving conversion	Using a structured approach to improving conversion	Using a structured approach to improving conversion
Resource	No individuals solely responsible for conversion	Multiple individuals responsible for conversion	Multiple individuals responsible for conversion
Testing approach	Running 1-2 tests per month  Focused on running simple tests	Running 3+ tests per month  Occasional running of complex tests	Running 3+ tests per month  Frequent running of complex tests
Testing methods	Using A/B testing, online surveys/customer feedback or copy optimization	Starting to use usability testing, segmentation or website personalization	Using usability testing, segmentation and website personalization
Website personalization	Not personalizing website	Starting to align email and website personalization	Aligning email and website personalization  Personalizing products browsed and customer account area of website



## 4. FINDINGS

### 4.1. Importance of conversion rate optimization

It is just as important (if not more so) to turn existing customers into repeat buyers as it is to attract completely new ones, and this is where conversion rate optimization proves its worth. There are a wealth of tools promising to help with this process, and action can be taken across all channels at each stage of the customer journey, making it an exciting field of opportunity for businesses.

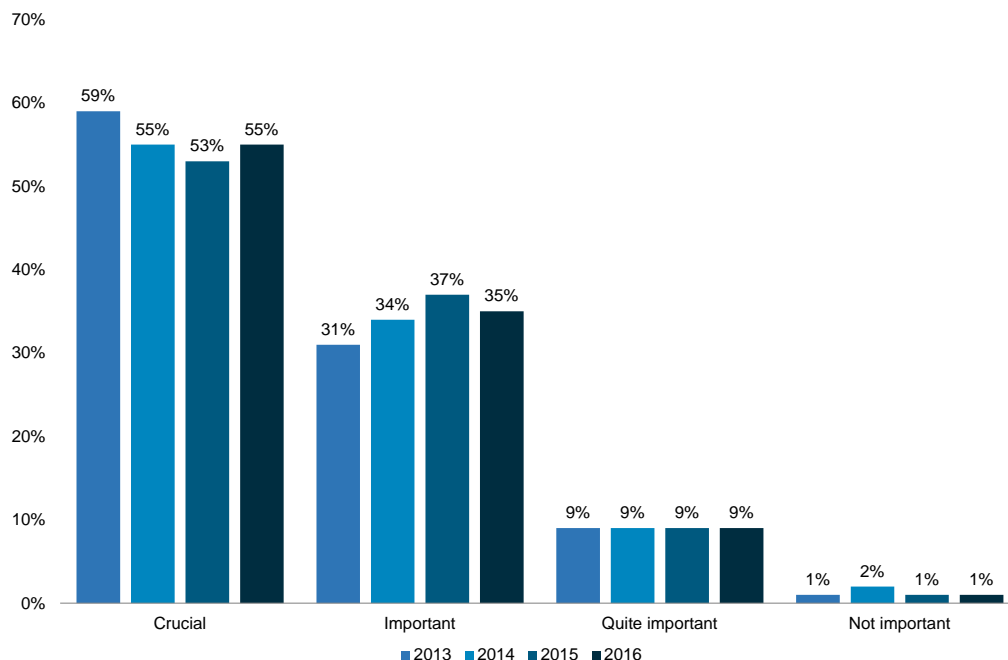
Conversion rate optimization is seen as 'crucial' to overall digital marketing strategies by over half (55%, up from 53% in 2015) of companies in this

year's survey (*Figure 2*). A further third (35%) rank it as 'important', and this highlights the continuing acknowledgement that optimizing conversion rates is an essential part of digital success.

Over the last four years, the response to this question has remained largely unchanged, suggesting that conversion rate optimization continues to be a key area of focus among digital marketers.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 2: How important is conversion rate optimization to your overall digital marketing strategy?**



Respondents 2016: 474  
Respondents 2015: 488 | 2014: 554 | 2013: 450

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“Access to knowledge and understanding of conversion rate optimization continues to grow exponentially – in the last few years importance of conversion rate optimization has remained at a high rate. What’s changing now is the need to work harder on data setup and integration.”**

Depesh Mandalia, CMO, toucanBox

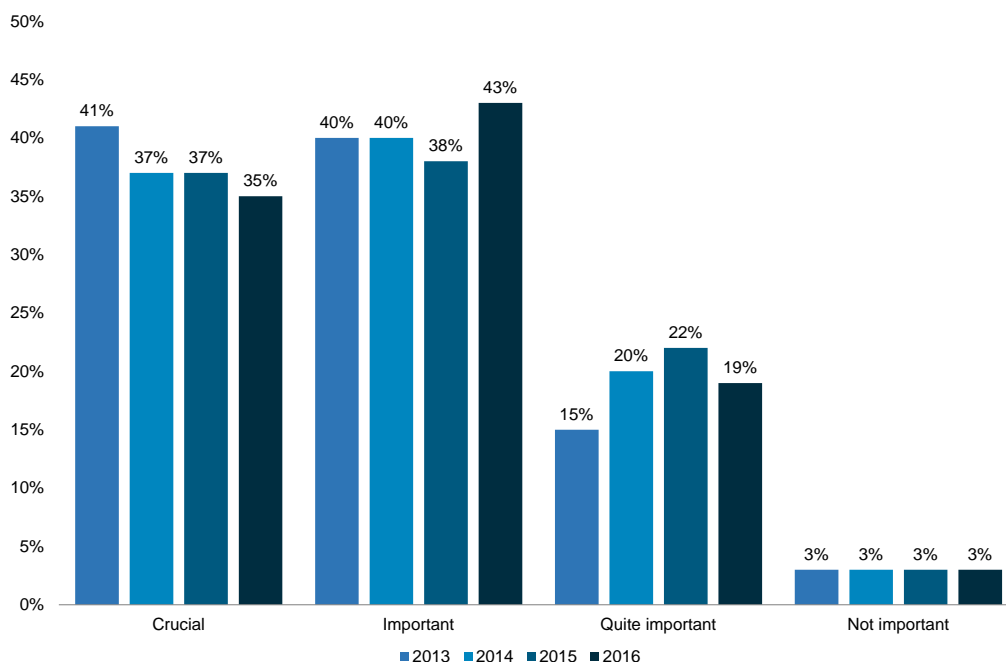
**“The majority of companies still view CRO as ‘crucial’, with only 1% viewing as ‘not important’. It’s a rarity to get any kind of consensus on what is/isn’t ‘crucial’ in any business, so this essentially indicates that if you do not feel it’s in your interest to focus a good amount of resource on CRO, you are a big exception among website owners.”**

Dan Barker, Independent Consultant

As seen in *Figure 3*, conversion rate optimization is ‘crucial’ or ‘important’ to 78% of agency clients (up by 4% since last year), continuing to play an integral part in their overall digital marketing strategy. Only 3% of agencies say that their clients view this as ‘not important’, signalling an awareness of the impact conversion rate optimization can have on overall business success.

### Agency respondents

**Figure 3: How important is conversion rate optimization to your clients' overall digital marketing strategy?**



Respondents 2016: 268  
Respondents 2015: 285 | 2014: 374 | 2013: 376



## 4.2. Change in focus on conversion rate optimization

Over four-fifths (82%) of respondents report that the focus on conversion rate optimization within their company has increased in the past five years, with the remaining 18% saying that the focus has remained the same (*Figure 4*).

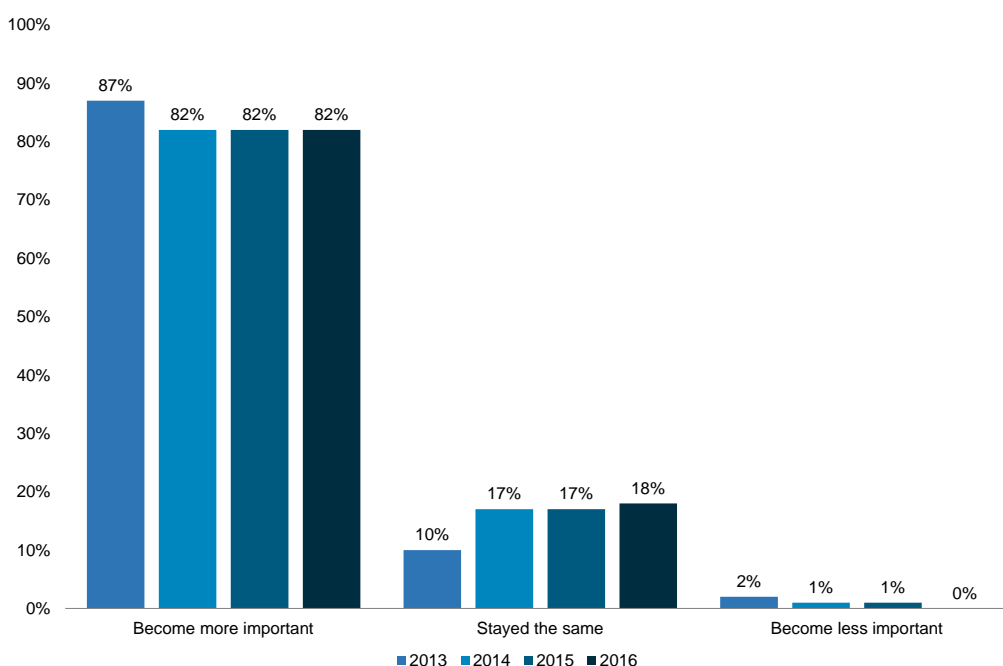
The fact that this high proportion of companies seeing increased importance has remained level for the past three years indicates not just that conversion rate optimization is still important, but that it is becoming increasingly so.

It may be that actions taken to improve conversion rates have been showing positive results, that businesses are beginning to understand the benefits of optimization, or simply that it's become a hygiene factor in the digital marketing process. Whatever the reason, industry-wide and on a company-by-company basis, conversion rate optimization is still very much a point of focus and rising through the ranks.

Other Econsultancy research has shown that 49% of companies see optimizing conversion rates as a top-three growth/profit-related requirement for their company, and this realization is being reflected in the strong numbers here.<sup>1</sup>

### Company respondents

**Figure 4: How do you feel the focus on conversion rate optimization (within your organization) has changed in the past five years?**



Respondents 2016: 472  
Respondents 2015: 490 | 2014: 551 | 2013: 449

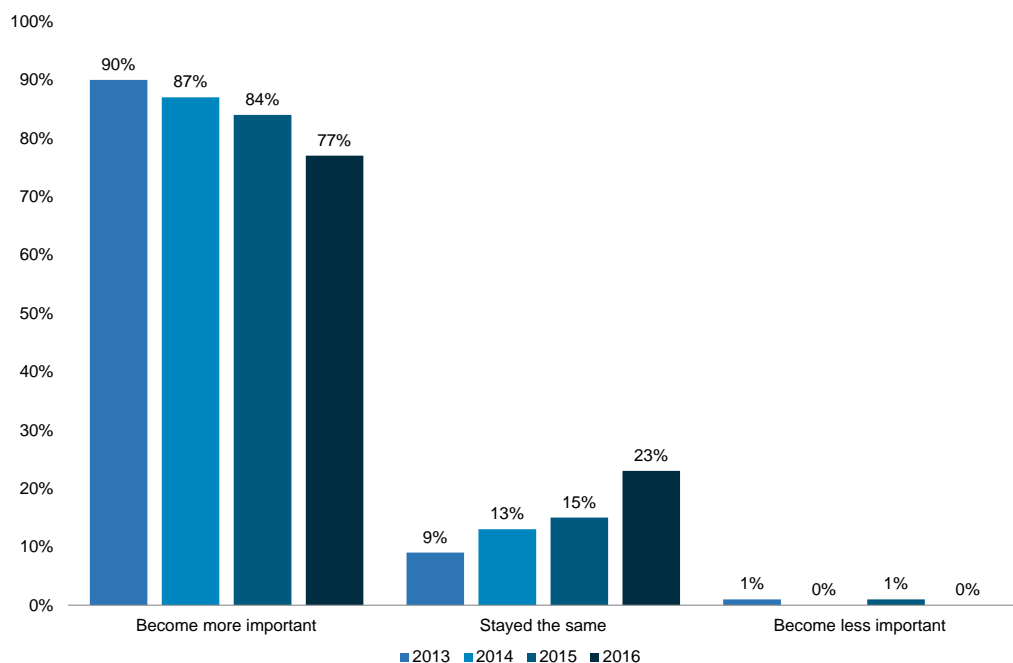
<sup>1</sup> <https://econsultancy.com/reports/measurement-and-analytics-report>

Among agency respondents, a different story is emerging. While respondents still overwhelmingly say that conversion rate optimization is of growing importance, the proportion of agencies saying that their clients' organizations have seen it become more important has decreased by 14% over the past four years (Figure 5).

**CONVERSION RATE OPTIMIZATION IS STILL VERY MUCH A POINT OF FOCUS AND RISING THROUGH THE RANKS.**

#### Agency respondents

**Figure 5: How do you feel the focus on conversion rate optimization (within your clients' organizations) has changed in the past five years?**



Respondents 2016: 269  
Respondents 2015: 285 | 2014: 374 | 2013: 376

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“Marketers understand the need for a focus on growth through optimization – what’s now coming through clearer is the need for data integration. In particular the proliferation of available tools made the barrier to entry much lower. It has led to an overreliance on finding silver bullets through tools when data and insights are the real foundation of a strong CRO programme.”

Depesh Mandalia, CMO, toucanBox



### 4.3. Satisfaction with online conversion rate

Respondents were then asked how satisfied they are with their conversion rates and *Figure 6* shows that opinions are somewhat divided. As was the case last year, only a tiny minority (1%) would count themselves as being 'very satisfied'. This reflects the pattern of previous years, indicating there is still room for improvement.

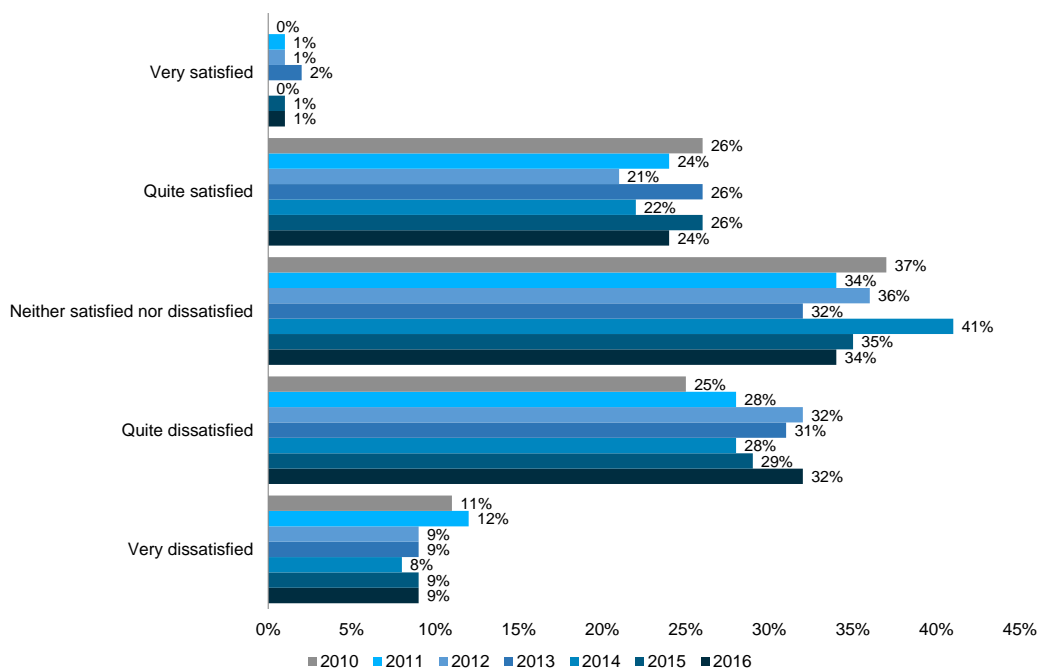
Encouragingly, about a quarter (24%) of companies are 'quite satisfied' with their performance, implying that their efforts appear to be paying off. However, the proportion of those who are either 'quite' or 'very' dissatisfied has increased by 8% since last year, so there is clearly a long way to go.

This means that two-fifths of companies still have a long journey ahead when it comes to optimizing conversion rates. It may be that they are not yet doing any optimization at all, or that the methods they are using are inadequate.

Interestingly, a further third (34%) describe themselves as being 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied'. With a fairly high proportion of companies being ambivalent, there might be a lack of understanding or communication across the business as to how these measures are performing.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 6: How satisfied are you with your conversion rates?**



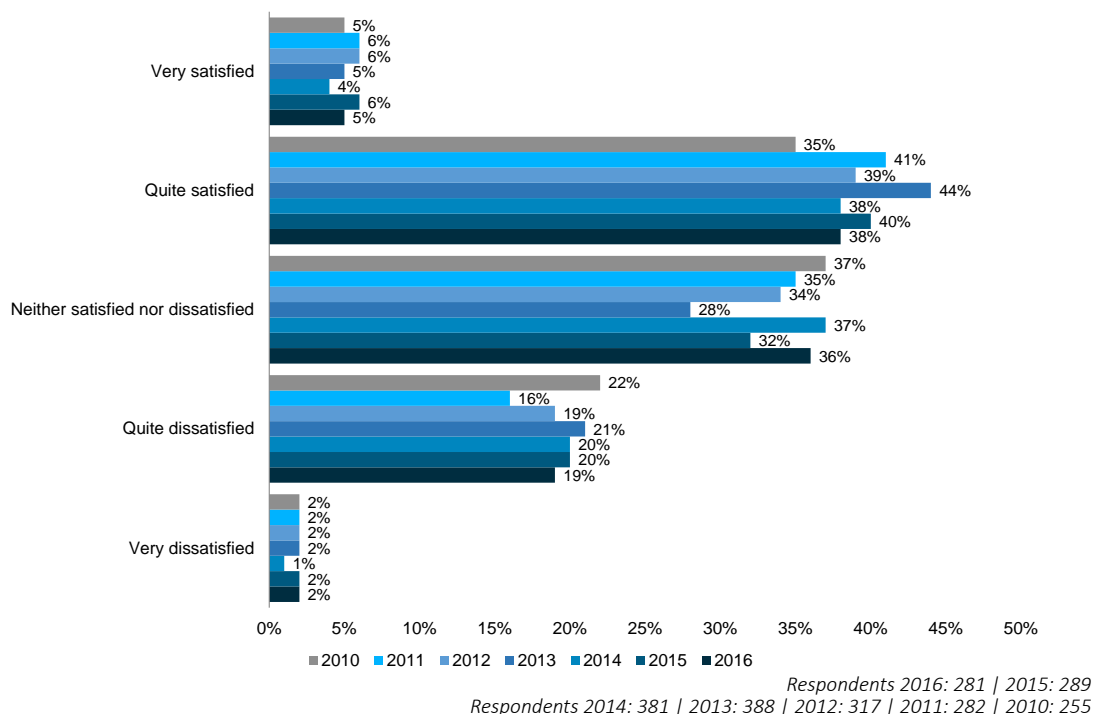
Respondents 2016: 490 | 2015: 502  
Respondents 2014: 565 | 2013: 460 | 2012: 449 | 2011: 341 | 2010: 351

Agencies are slightly more optimistic, with over two-fifths (43%) of respondents saying that their clients are satisfied with their conversion rates (*Figure 7*), compared to 25% of company respondents. There is also a smaller proportion (2%, compared to 9% of company respondents) who describe their clients as being 'very dissatisfied'.

Again, though, there is that third (36%) who sit in the middle, uncertain as to how satisfied their clients are with their conversion rates. There are clearly still questions to be answered in terms of how conversion rates are optimized, but determining what success looks like is even more important. Without clear conversion goals, it is hard to know whether or not performance is satisfactory, so it could be at this planning level, too, that a layer of the discussion is missing.

### Agency respondents

**Figure 7: How satisfied are your clients with their conversion rates?**



THE PROPORTION OF COMPANIES THAT ARE EITHER 'QUITE' OR 'VERY' DISSATISFIED WITH THEIR CONVERSION RATES HAS INCREASED BY 8% SINCE 2015.





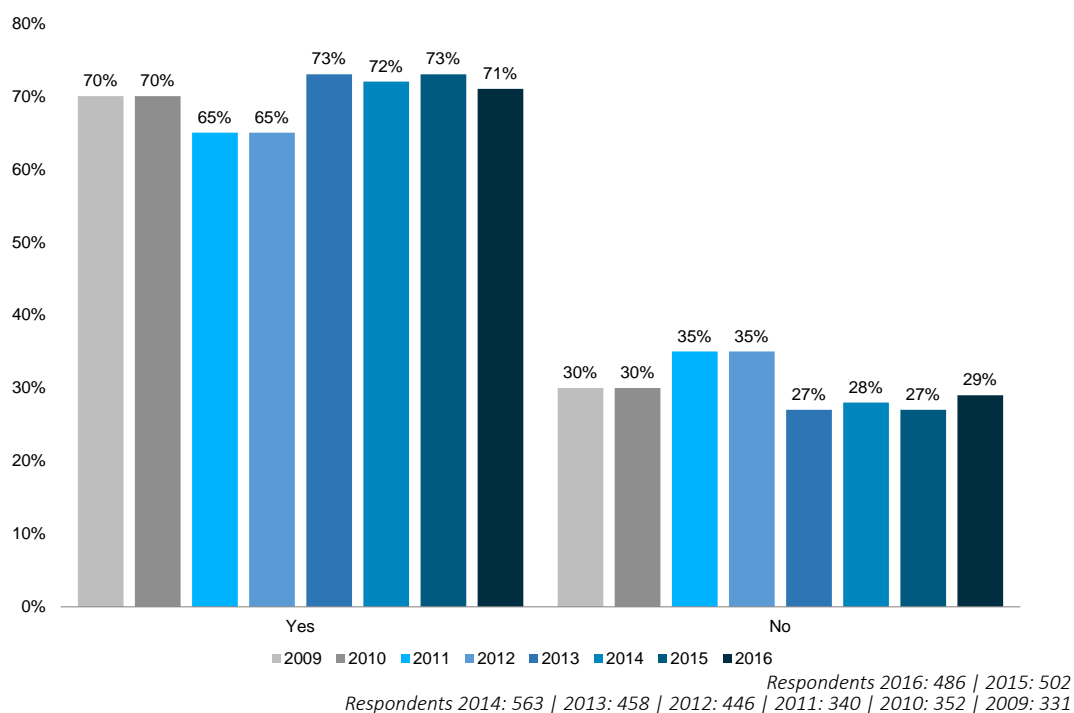
## 4.4. Improvement in online conversion rates in the last year

The majority (71% of companies, 80% of agencies) of survey respondents have seen an improvement in online conversion rates over the last 12 months. This indicates that most organizations have been focusing on actively making a difference to conversions.

It is encouraging to see that even those companies who were already enjoying success are continuing to see their conversion rates improve. The proportion of companies reporting an improvement has remained fairly consistent since 2009 (with the exception of a slight decline between 2011 and 2012), indicating that companies are continuing to see improvements with each year that passes, rather than reaching a plateau.

### Company respondents

Figure 8: Have your online conversion rates improved over the last 12 months?



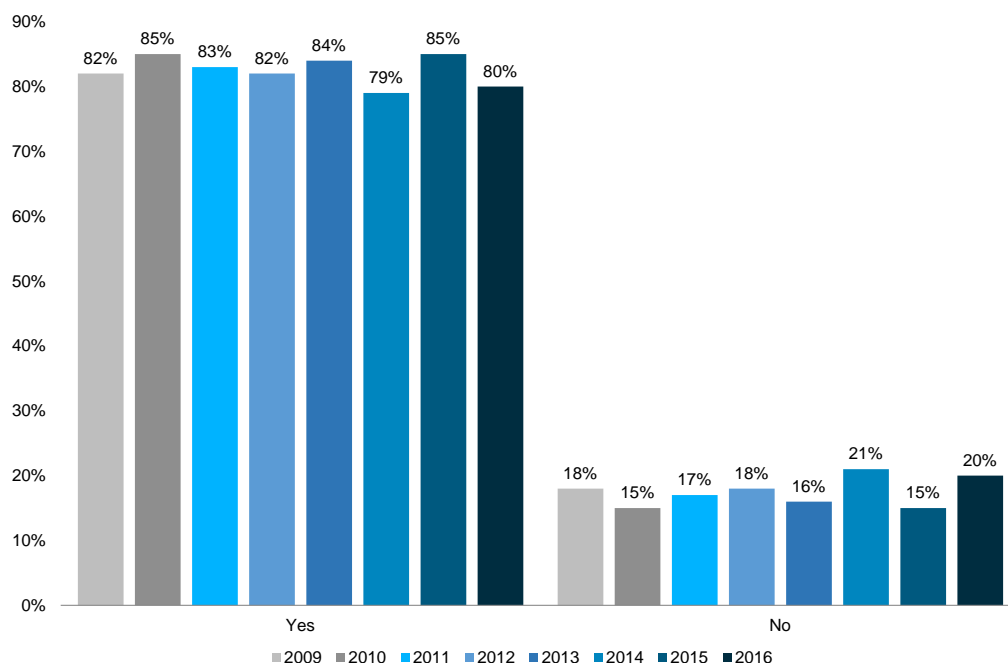
## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“Most companies have seen an improvement in conversion. That sounds right. When we began ten years ago, most websites were broken in some way. Checkout processes were like one of those tests on the Krypton Factor. Fortunately for users, the bar keeps rising.”

Ben Jesson, CEO, Conversion Rate Experts

### Agency respondents

Figure 9: Typically, have your clients' online conversion rates improved over the last 12 months?



Respondents 2016: 279 | 2015: 288  
Respondents 2014: 381 | 2013: 386 | 2012: 316 | 2011: 283 | 2010: 255 | 2009: 287

When respondents were asked about the single most effective thing they or their clients had done to improve conversion rates, testing has emerged as a dominant theme (Figure 10). A/B testing in particular was highlighted as one of the most effective methods that help with conversion rate improvements.

Personalization, customer journey analysis and segmentation, as well as content agility and checkout optimization, are regarded as very effective.

**SEVEN IN TEN  
ORGANIZATIONS HAVE  
SEEN AN IMPROVEMENT  
IN ONLINE CONVERSION  
RATES OVER THE LAST 12  
MONTHS.**

**Figure 10: What has been the single most effective thing you (or your clients) have done to improve conversion rates?**



## SURVEY RESPONDENTS



**What has been the single most effective thing you (or your clients) have done to improve conversion rates?**

“Allowing the headings on the page to change depending on what keyword drove them through to that landing page through PPC. We saw a 28% conversion increase from this alone.”

“Customer journey optimization – look at where they’re clicking to determine what content / product is popular, broken down by market and device, and optimize that way.”

“Deep analysis into web traffic for a specific goal. Very lengthy process but very positive outcomes.”

“Having a dedicated person devoted to optimization.”

“Improvements to the shopping basket to allow better visibility of products and consistency of styling increased our overall conversion rate.”

“Improving user journeys and simplifying our conversion funnel – fixing our ‘leaky bucket’ payment pages (i.e. asking for too much data or making it too difficult to convert).”

“Organizing a growth team which is exclusively focused on conversion optimization tests. We’ve also spent more time and energy instrumenting tools to measure results.”

“Well thought-out structural changes on key product pages, aligning them with best practice CRO guidelines backed up by data.”

“Effective customer journey and lifecycle mapping, segmenting the approach and tone based on these variables, as well as applying a behavioural and contextual layer to the touchpoints.”

“Working alongside a CRO specialist agency to understand key blockers in our funnel, and to amend strategy accordingly. The primary outcome is a renewed focus on content marketing which leads to improved conversion rates due to prequalification and nurturing of leads.”

“Website personalization where we use revisits and the referring website as means of personalization, as well as content (and product) personalization based on onsite behaviour.”

## 4.5. Change in online conversion rates over the last year

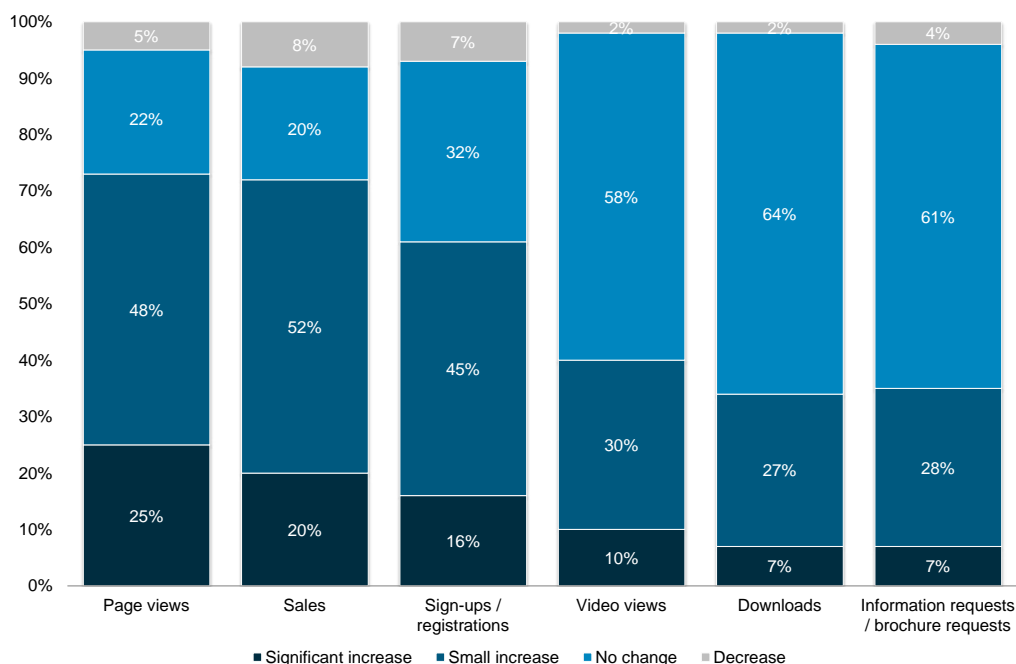
When these improvements are broken down further, it is clear that more success is being seen in some areas than others. Almost three-quarters of companies have seen an increase in their *page views* (73%) or *sales* (72%). At the other end of the scale, *downloads* (34%) and *information or brochure requests* (35%) have seen increases for just over a third of companies (*Figure 11*).

An increase in page views implies that more potential customers are being exposed to your company, while sales directly relate to the bottom line. This means that more emphasis is probably placed on optimizing these areas. Any conversion rate optimization strategy will have key areas of focus, and it makes sense that actions with a more tangible impact are reaping the rewards.

It is worth considering these numbers outside the context of conversion rate optimization alone. One could argue that some companies are moving away from focusing on downloads or sending out brochures to more personalized options.

### Company respondents

**Figure 11: Specifically, have any of the following conversion rates improved?**



Respondents: 457

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“The web industry has winner-takes-all economics. It’s a race for domination. The companies that reported ‘no change’ are actually ‘losing’. Even the companies that reported a ‘small increase’ may not be improving fast enough to guarantee survival.”

Ben Jesson, CEO, Conversion Rate Experts

## 72% OF COMPANIES HAVE EXPERIENCED AN INCREASE IN SALES OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS.

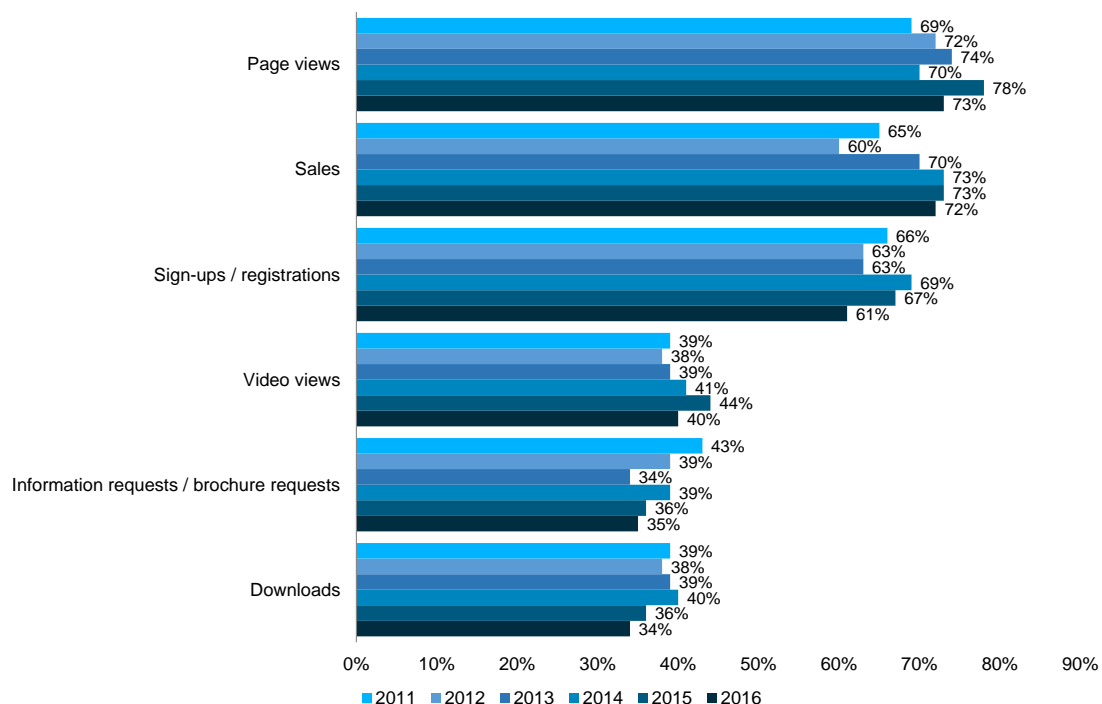
Over the six years that this question has been asked of survey respondents, there has been a clear split between the top three answers and the bottom three answers. *Page views, sales and sign-ups or registrations* have retained the top three positions (*Figure 12*), and relate directly to the previous point that they are conversions with a more tangible output.

Each year, we are seeing that rather than trying to improve all metrics at once, companies are focusing on those that matter when it comes to increasing revenue. Between these three priority metrics and the rest, there is a gap of 21 percentage points, indicating a clear drop in conversion rate success in the areas of *video views, information or brochure requests and downloads*.



### Company respondents

**Figure 12: Proportion of companies saying different types of conversion rates improved (either 'significant' or 'small' increase)**



Respondents 2016: 457 | 2015: 441  
Respondents 2014: 497 | 2013: 413 | 2012: 398 | 2011: 297



## 4.6. Tools and strategies

### 4.6.1. Methods currently used for improving conversion rates

There are a wide range of methods to employ when it comes to conversion rate optimization, so respondents were asked which of these they are using or planning to use.

As seen in *Figure 13* overleaf, *A/B testing* (61%), *online surveys / customer feedback* (54%) and *copy optimization* (51%) are all being used by over half of respondents, with a further third planning to add these methods to their toolkit (31%, 33% and 36% respectively).

Separate Econsultancy research<sup>2</sup> revealed that over two-fifths (46%) of companies were planning to increase investment in A/B testing or multivariate testing in 2016, with 40% planning to increase investment overall for their conversion and optimization tools. This investment should start to have an impact on the adoption of the various methods shown in *Figure 13*.

Over two-fifths (42%) of respondents have no plans to use the *expert usability* reviews that a quarter are currently employing. Part of the reluctance to use this method may be because of the need to bring in external voices, whereas things like testing and customer journey analysis can be ongoing and done in-house, offering a potentially more long-term solution.

The method that most respondents are planning to use is *website personalization* (55%), followed by *event-triggered / behavioural email* (47%) and *customer journey analysis* (45%). The fact that over half are planning to personalize their websites shows that companies are increasingly seeing the value of doing so, although it is interesting to see that so far only 25% have this in place.

*Segmentation* is also planned by a high proportion of companies (44%), which is unsurprising given that the latter and personalisation go hand in hand. Personalisation is the natural next step of A/B testing and the first step of personalisation is understanding and targeting the segments for basing content personalisation on. In the coming years, a surge can be expected in using single customer view data platforms and the increased use of segmentation for omnichannel personalisation.

It is a very large task to personalize a whole website, which could be why some are still finding themselves in the planning stages. Arguably, things like testing and copy optimization can be put into action much quicker, although this all depends on the internal expertise within the company and what exactly is being optimized.



### WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“It’s surprising that only three techniques are being used by more than half of the companies. If you consider that both lighter blue areas represent ‘not currently doing’, the chart looks sparse, indicating how much opportunity most companies still have.**

**“More than half (52%) of companies still don’t do usability testing. That’s like discovering that a friend still hasn’t seen *Breaking Bad*. They have a treat in store.”**

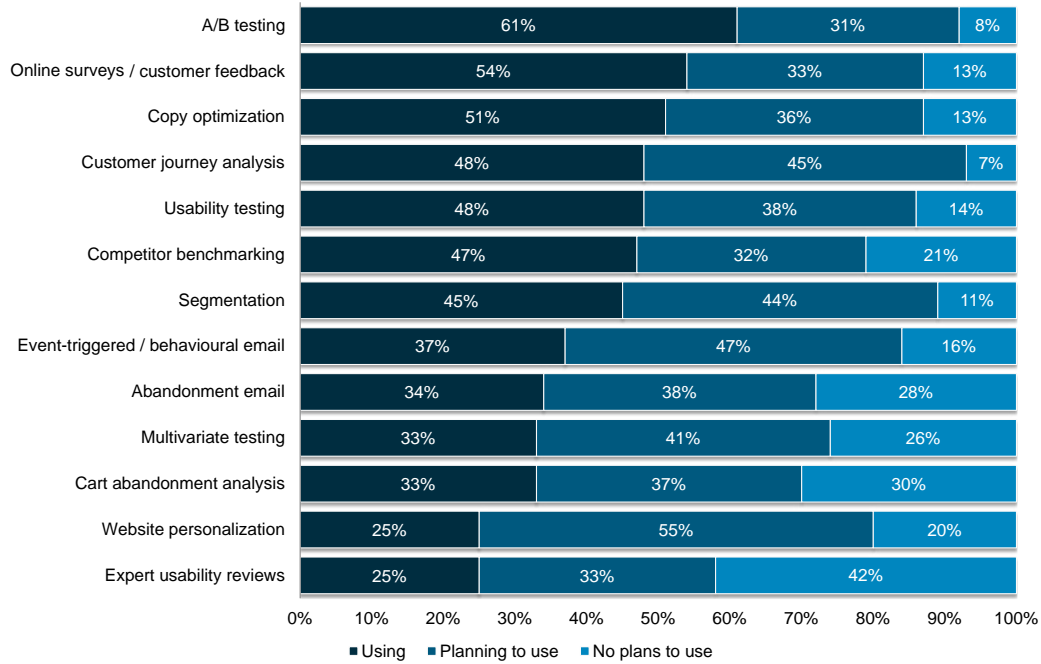
Ben Jesson, CEO, Conversion Rate Experts



2 <https://econsultancy.com/reports/marketing-budgets>

## Company respondents

**Figure 13: Which of the following methods do you currently use to improve conversion rates?**



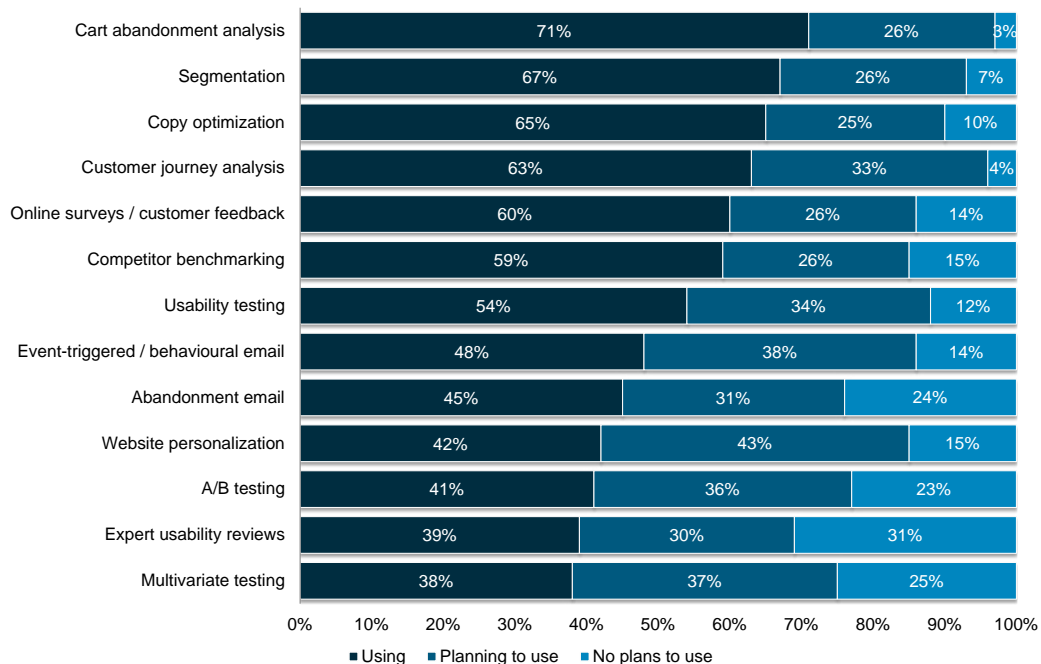
Respondents: 447

Agencies report a larger proportion of their clients to be using a wider toolkit. Almost three-quarters (71%) say that their clients are engaging in *cart abandonment analysis* (Figure 14), which only a third (33%) of companies say they are using. This could suggest that it's a technique recommended by agencies in particular, potentially because it's an area in which they are experienced.

*Segmentation*, which takes second place for agency respondents, is again an area of difference, as it's used by 45% of companies but 67% of agency clients.

## Agency respondents

**Figure 14: Which of the following methods do your clients currently use to improve conversion rates?**



Respondents: 246

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“Personalization could take off soon, with only a quarter of companies doing it but over half planning to use it. Similarly, if all the companies planning to do customer journey analysis actually do it this would overtake A/B testing as the most used method. But with both being seen as more complex than A/B testing we will have to wait and see.”

Suniel Curtis, Head of Analytics, Hays

### 4.6.2. Value of methods used for improving conversion rates

Not all methods necessarily reap rewards, and this became clear once respondents were asked to rank these methods by the value they provide to their CRO efforts (*Figure 15*). Encouragingly, at least 85% of respondents are finding each method valuable to some extent, which indicates that resource is being used appropriately.

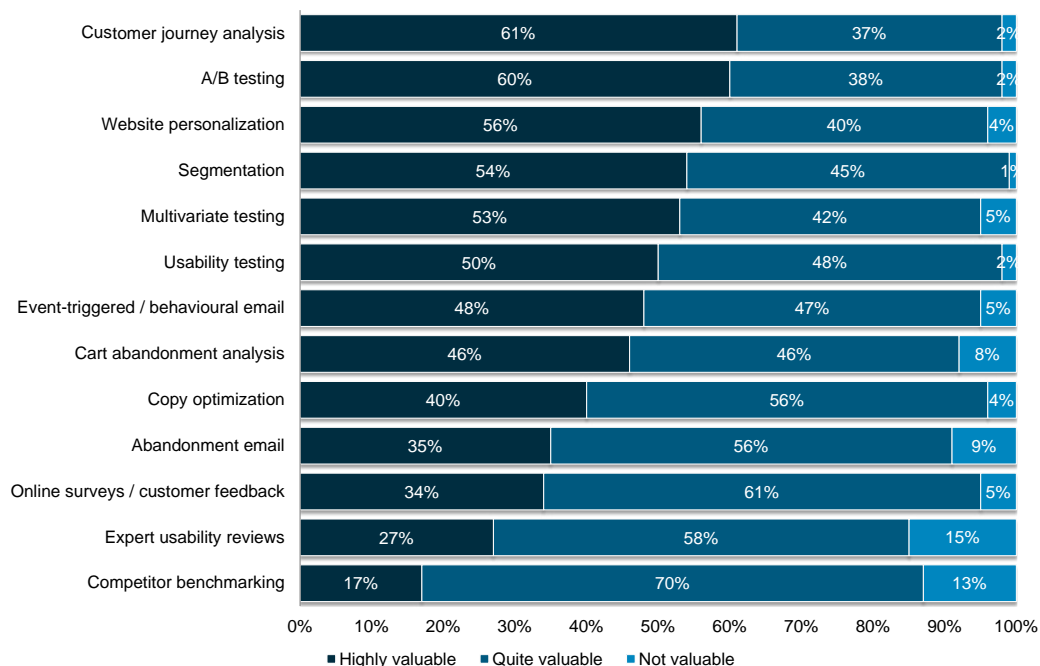
Three-fifths of respondents find *customer journey analysis* (61%) and *A/B testing* (60%) to be ‘highly valuable’. Agency results paint a similar picture, with roughly half (52% and 47% respectively) saying their clients consider these methods to be ‘highly valuable’ (*Figure 17*).

Least valuable according to company respondents are *expert usability reviews* (although 85% do rate them as ‘highly’ or ‘quite’ valuable), which could partially explain why 42% of those who aren’t currently using this method don’t plan to implement it, as seen in the previous section. *Competitor benchmarking*, although carried out by 47% of companies, is only ‘highly valuable’ to 17%.

One key reason for the decrease in appetite for expert usability reviews is the availability of session replay tools and unmoderated remote usability testing. However, it’s important to remember that lab-based usability testing is still seen as highly valuable because it uncovers the areas to focus on and prioritize to most effectively improve conversion rates.

#### Company respondents

Figure 15: How valuable do you find the following methods for improving conversion rates?



Respondents: 185

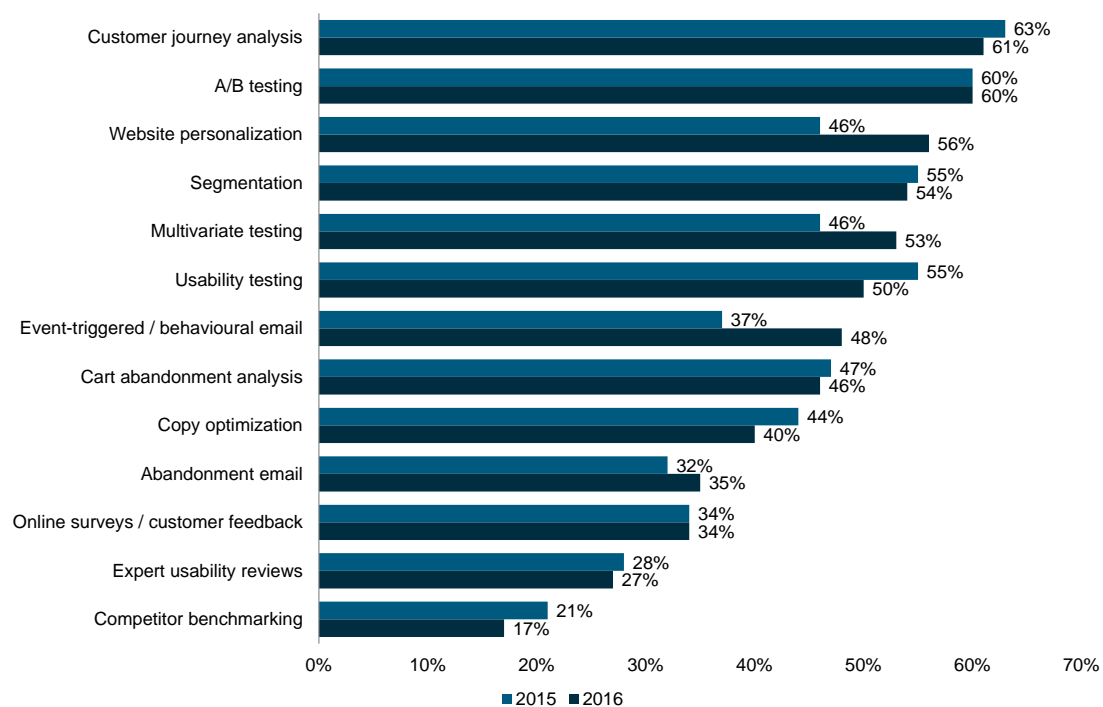
Evaluating methods for improving conversion rates is useful, because there is no point putting a lot of time and resources into methods that are not bringing rewards. If value is not being proven, the method needs to be reassessed or replaced with another.

When compared to last year's survey results, there are some noticeable jumps in terms of the proportions of companies rating some methods as 'highly valuable'. *Website personalization* has risen in favour, now being seen as 'highly valuable' by 22% more companies than in 2015. *Event-triggered/behavioural email* has been rated as highly valuable by 30% more respondents than last year, and *multivariate testing* by 15%.



## Company respondents

**Figure 16: Proportion of companies rating methods as 'highly valuable' for improving conversion rates**



Respondents 2016: 185  
Respondents 2015: 209



## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**"It is great to see over half of companies testing the checkout process now. Although usually more complex than testing CTA buttons and copy, we have certainly found it can have a massive impact."**

Suniel Curtis, Head of Analytics, Hays

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“Personalization was ranked as the highest value method for improving conversion rates by agencies responding on behalf of their clients, noticeably higher than companies running personalization themselves.

“The majority of personalization solutions today require significant investment in resources to implement and maintain, so it is very likely that the dedicated resource of an agency or partner is the deciding factor in the value companies see from personalization. As solutions become more user-friendly and companies invest further in resources dedicated to personalization these numbers should become much closer.”

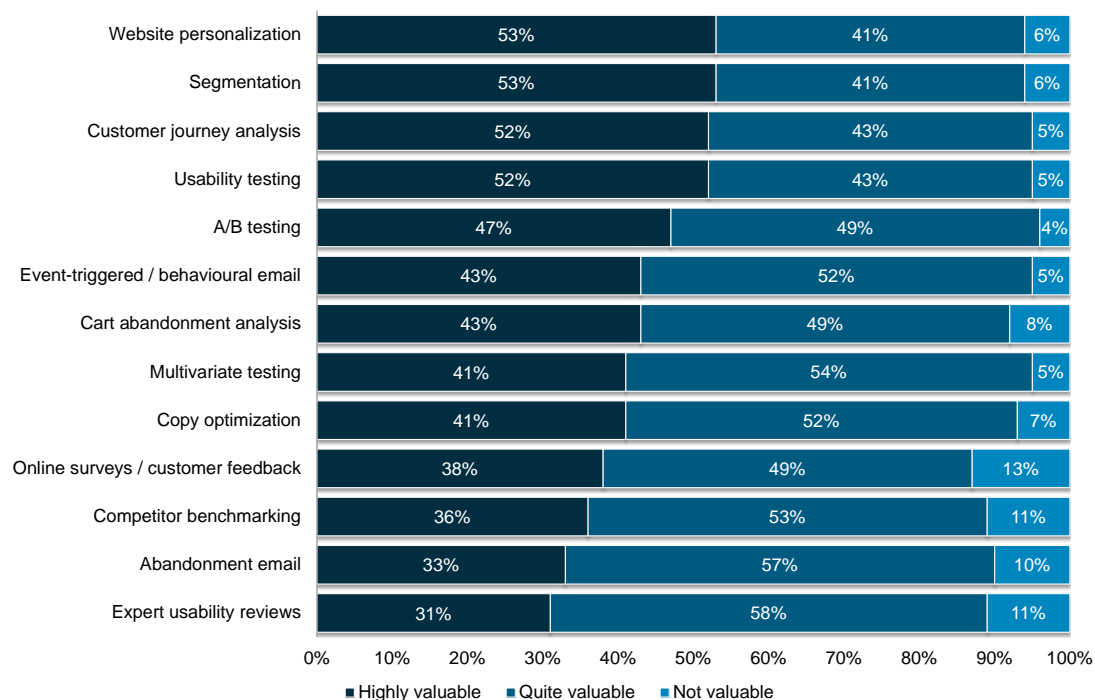
Tai Rattigan, Head of Partnerships EMEA, Optimizely

*Website personalization and segmentation*, closely followed by *customer journey analysis* and *usability testing*, were rated as ‘highly valuable’ for their clients by just over half of agencies surveyed (Figure 17). Three of these methods feature in the top four as ranked by companies, too. While the overall proportions of agencies rating each of these top options as ‘highly valuable’ is lower, the pattern tells a similar story, suggesting that clients taking agency advice are finding similar results.

In fact, there is little variation overall in the order in which these options have been ranked when the charts for companies and agencies are compared side by side. For example, *multivariate testing* ranks fifth for companies and eighth for agencies, but overall in both cases 95% of respondents do find the method valuable to some extent.

### Agency respondents

**Figure 17: Typically, how valuable do your clients find the following methods for improving conversion rates?**



Respondents: 113

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“Website personalization can be powerful, but it often ties companies up in knots. The trick is to use it without introducing complexity.

“The prominence of a technique tends to be proportional to the number of salespeople selling it. The vendors dictate the discussions. Techniques that haven’t been productized tend to fly under the radar. Dogfooding, for example, is more fruitful than almost everything on the list, but few people are doing it.”

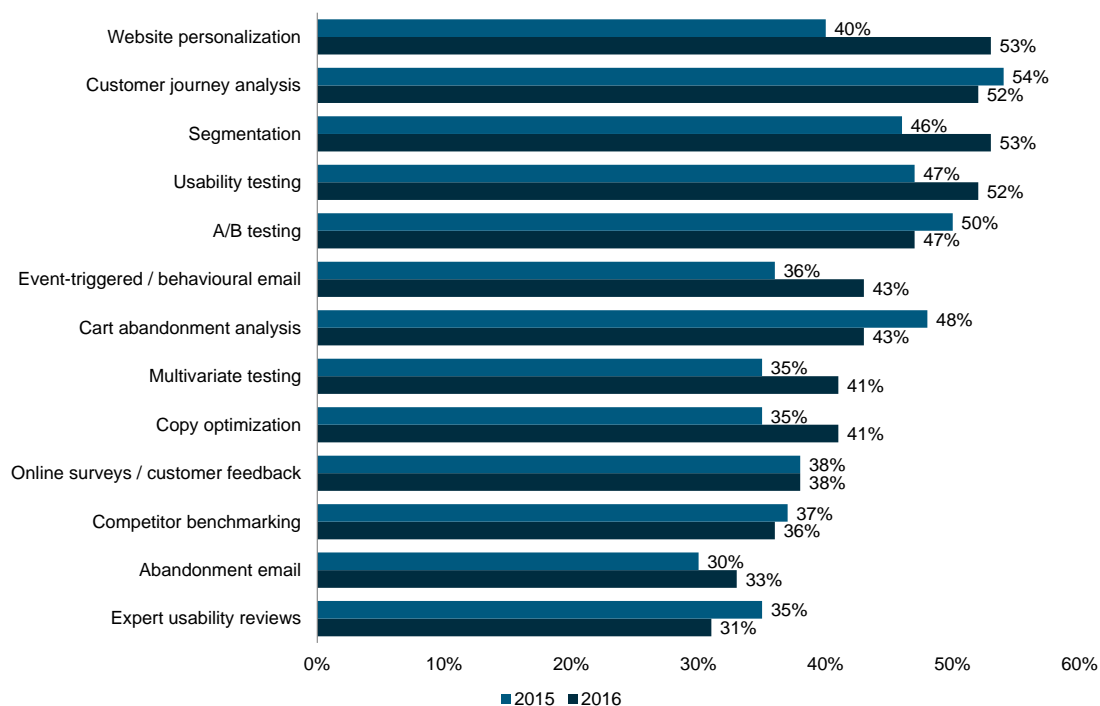
Ben Jesson, CEO, Conversion Rate Experts

*Website personalization* has risen in favour among agency clients, with a 33% increase in the proportion of those describing the method as ‘highly valuable’ compared to last year. This is following the same trend we’ve seen on the client side.

There have also been noticeable increases in favour for *event-triggered / behavioural email* (+19%), *segmentation* (+15%), *multivariate testing* and *copy optimization* (both +17%). This may be as a result of the fact that companies are improving their practices over time and working on these methods to deliver increasingly better results.

### Agency respondents

**Figure 18: Proportion of agencies saying their clients rate methods as ‘highly valuable’ for improving conversion rates**



Respondents 2016: 113  
Respondents 2015: 125



### 4.6.3. Difficulty implementing methods used for improving conversion rates

When looking at the perceived difficulty associated with implementing different methods for improving conversion rates, another potential reason for the growing value of *website personalization* (see *Figure 16* and *Figure 18*) becomes evident.

The proportion of respondents stating that this method is 'very difficult' to implement has slightly declined since last year (see *Figure 20* and *Figure 22*). It therefore makes sense that its value would be increasing year-on-year (as discussed in the previous section) as companies learn how to do it well and get to grips with optimizing via this channel.

Compared to the second most difficult to implement method, *multivariate testing*, 70% more companies rate *website personalization* as 'very difficult' (*Figure 19*). A further 47% agree that it is 'quite difficult' to implement, potentially because there are so many aspects to a website which could be personalized that a comprehensive plan needs to support optimization efforts.

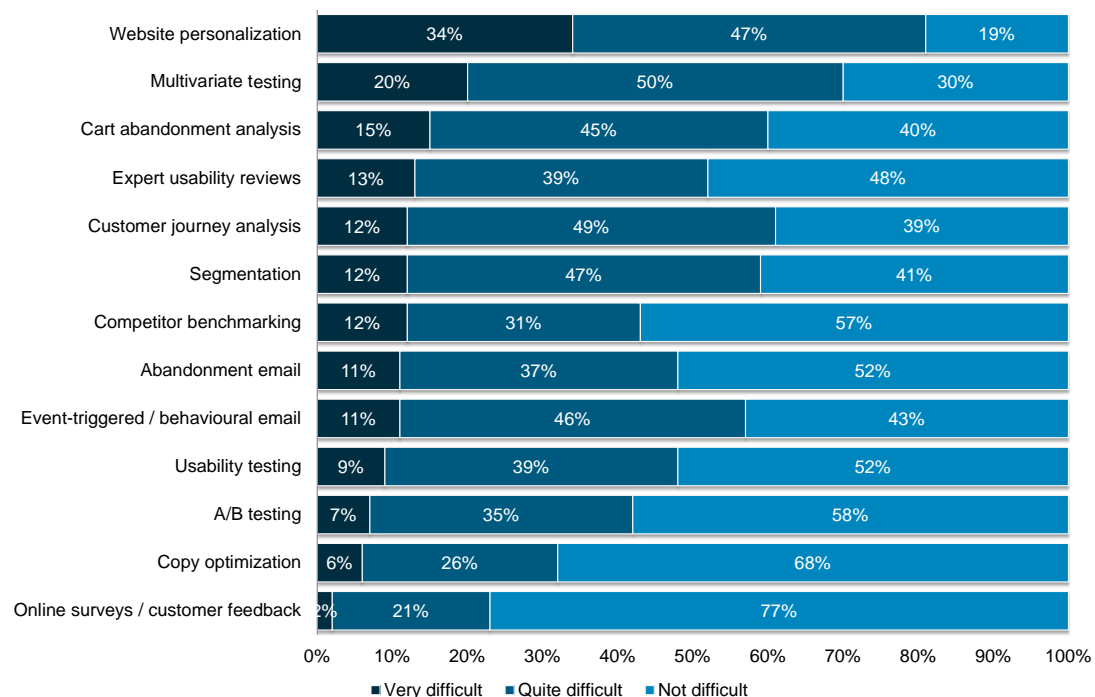
Although web personalization is seen as the most difficult method to implement, in the coming years we will see a change with new tools in the market allowing companies to easily personalize the content based on customer segments with integrated data solutions. Personalization does not need to be complex and with generic A/B testing tools that allow companies to target users based on context it can be the first step of personalizing the site. Companies should leverage that as a starting point.

The least difficult method to implement is *online surveys / customer feedback*, with over three-quarters of companies (77%) rating these as 'not difficult', followed by *copy optimization*, which is 'not difficult' for 68%.

**COMPANIES ARE 6% LESS LIKELY TO SAY THAT PERSONALIZATION IS 'VERY DIFFICULT' TO IMPLEMENT.**

#### Company respondents

**Figure 19: How difficult is it to implement the following methods for improving conversion rates?**



Respondents: 227

## “WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“Expert usability reviews should be ridiculously easy to implement – and incredibly effective – unless the experts are suggesting impractical changes.”**

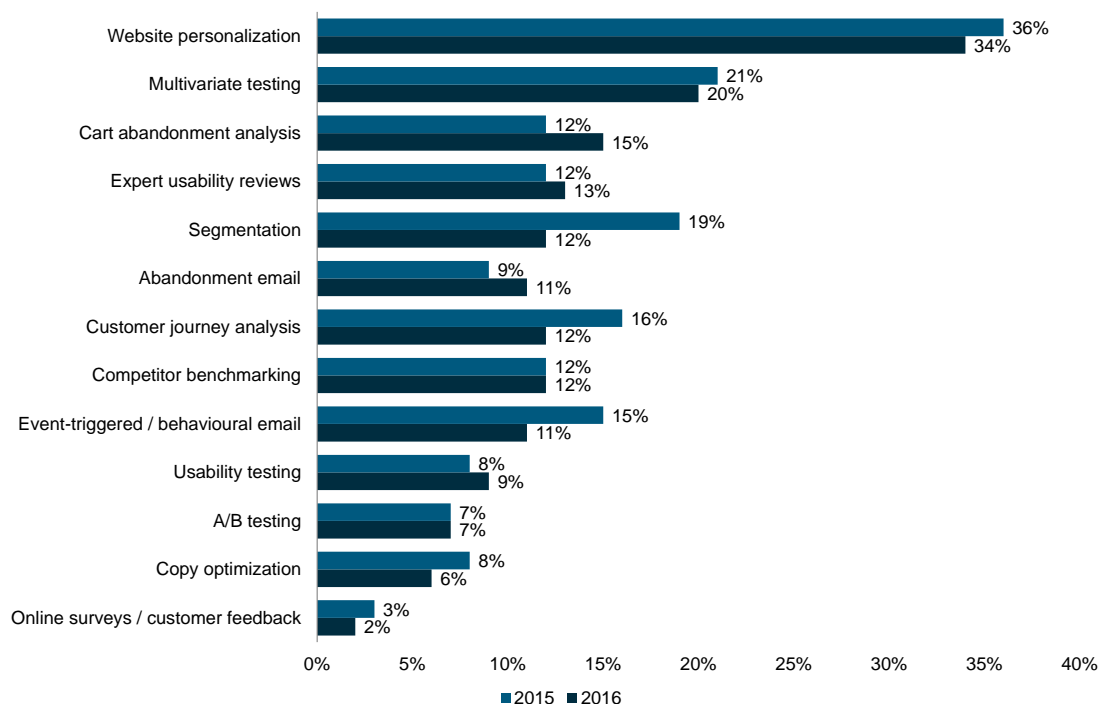
Ben Jesson, CEO, Conversion Rate Experts

*Website personalization* has maintained the top position in terms of being the most difficult method to implement for conversion rate optimization, followed like last year by *multivariate testing* (Figure 20). *Segmentation* shows a clear shift, with 37% fewer respondents labelling the method as ‘very difficult’ to implement than in 2015.

Agency results are similar, with *website personalization* and *multivariate testing* retaining their positions as most difficult to implement over the last year (Figure 21). *Multivariate testing* is considered to be ‘very difficult’ to implement by a larger proportion of agency clients than company respondents (28% versus 20%).

### Company respondents

**Figure 20: Proportion of companies rating method as ‘very difficult’ to implement for improving conversion rates**



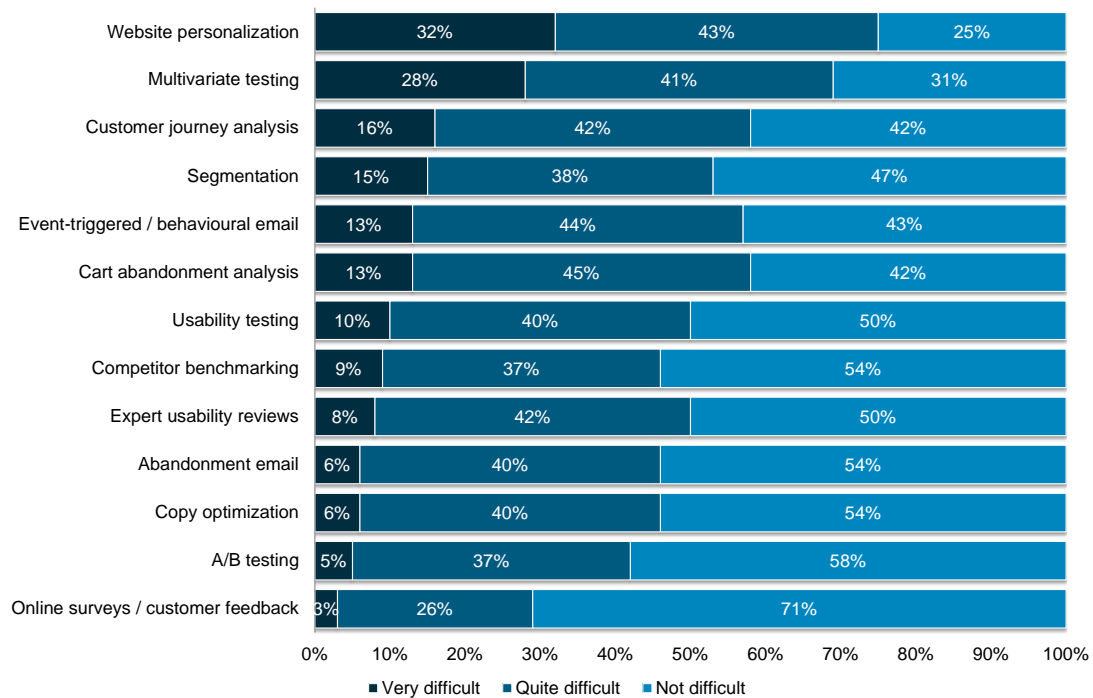
Respondents 2016: 227  
Respondents 2015: 207

At the other end of the scale, there is a consensus across both groups that *online surveys / customer feedback* is the least problematic method in terms of implementation.

Roughly two-thirds to just over half of agencies report the majority of methods to be ‘not difficult’. This is an encouraging proportion, indicating that their clients are on top of the methods they can utilize when it comes to conversion rate optimization.

## Agency respondents

**Figure 21: Typically, how difficult to implement do your clients find the following methods for improving conversion rates?**



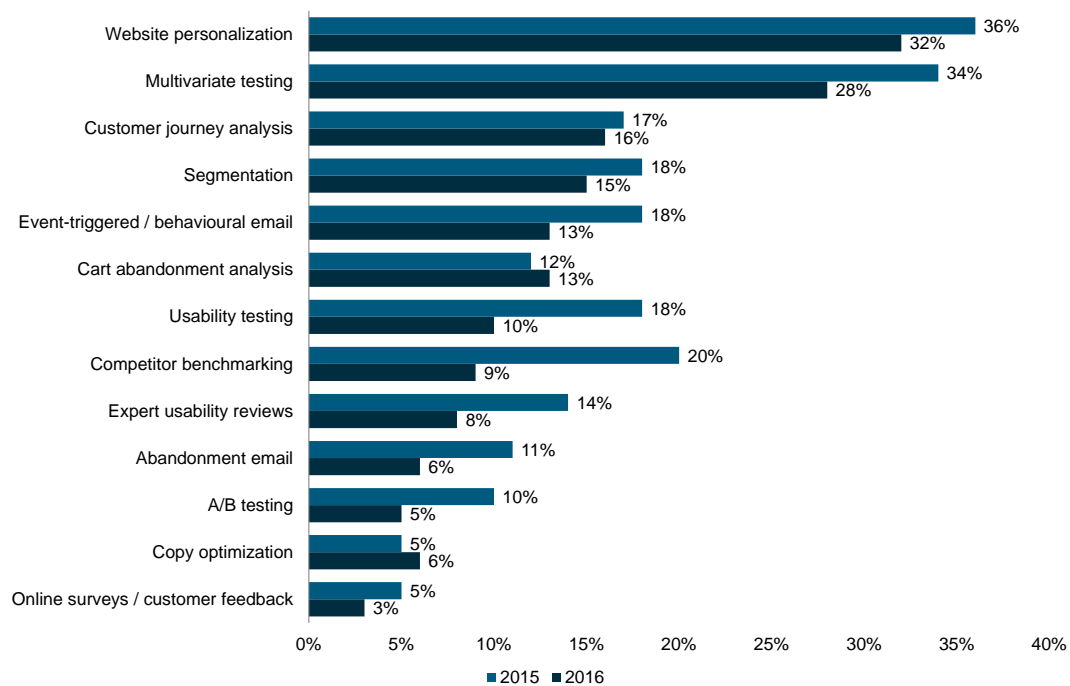
Respondents: 107

A number of the options rated lower down on the difficulty scale have dropped significantly in difficulty this year when compared to the 2015 responses (Figure 22). There has been a 55% decrease in the proportion of agency respondents

reporting that their clients find *competitor benchmarking* to be 'very difficult', a 44% decrease for *usability testing* and a 43% decrease for *expert usability reviews*.

## Agency respondents

**Figure 22: Proportion of agencies saying their clients rate method as 'very difficult' to implement for improving conversion rates**



Respondents 2016: 107  
Respondents 2015: 119

## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

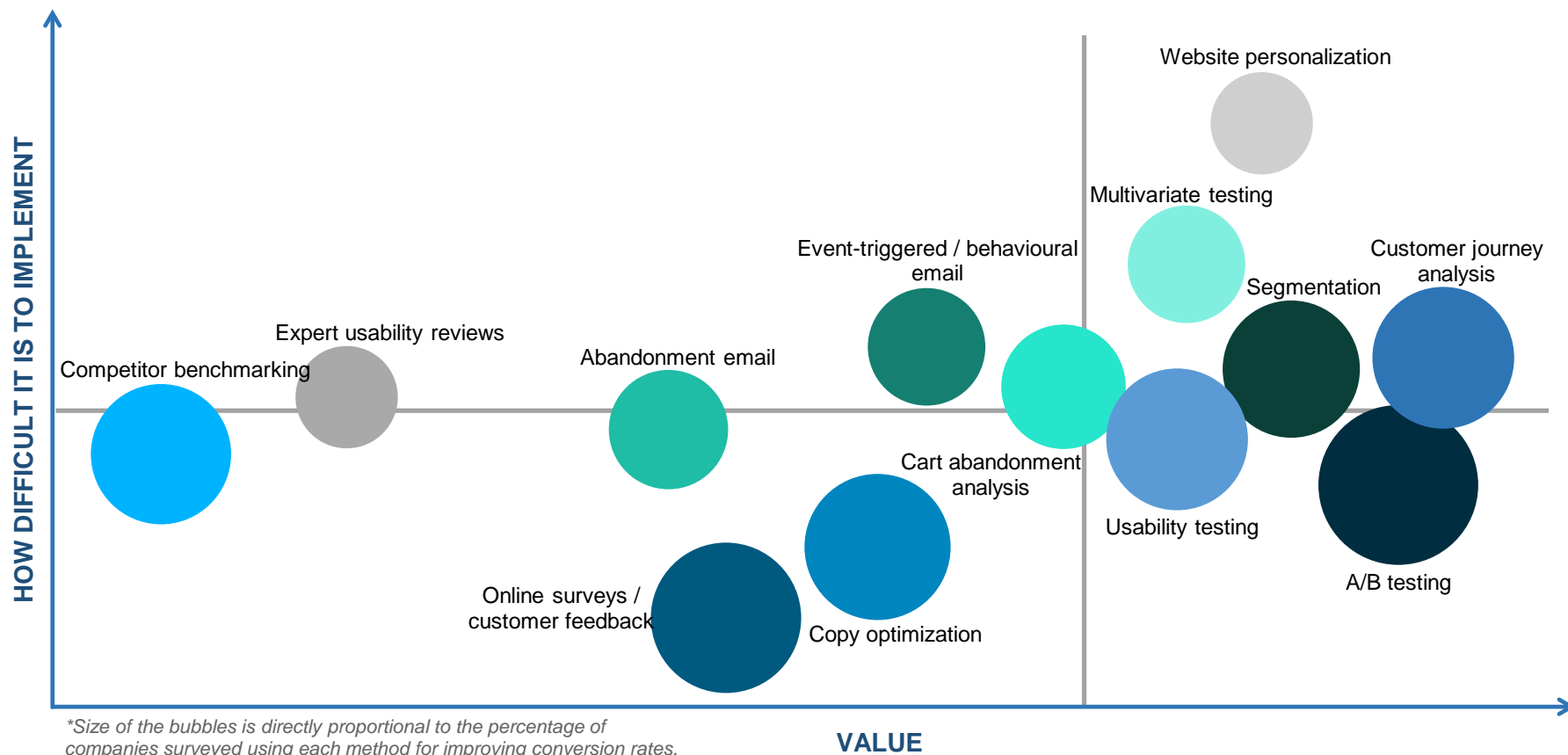
Figure 23 illustrates the value and difficulty of implementing the various methods used for improving conversion rates. The size of the bubbles is proportional to the percentage of companies surveyed using each method for improving conversion rates. Typically, the greater the value, the greater the difficulty of implementation.

**“It appears A/B testing is the obvious quick-win answer for those wanting to begin a CRO programme. Usability testing and customer journey analysis also perform highly on difficulty vs. value, which is a useful guide for those wanting to move away from simply thinking of conversion optimization as being synonymous with A/B testing.”**

Dan Barker, Independent Consultant

### Company respondents

**Figure 23: Value and difficulty of implementing methods used for improving conversion rates**



## 4.7. Testing and performance

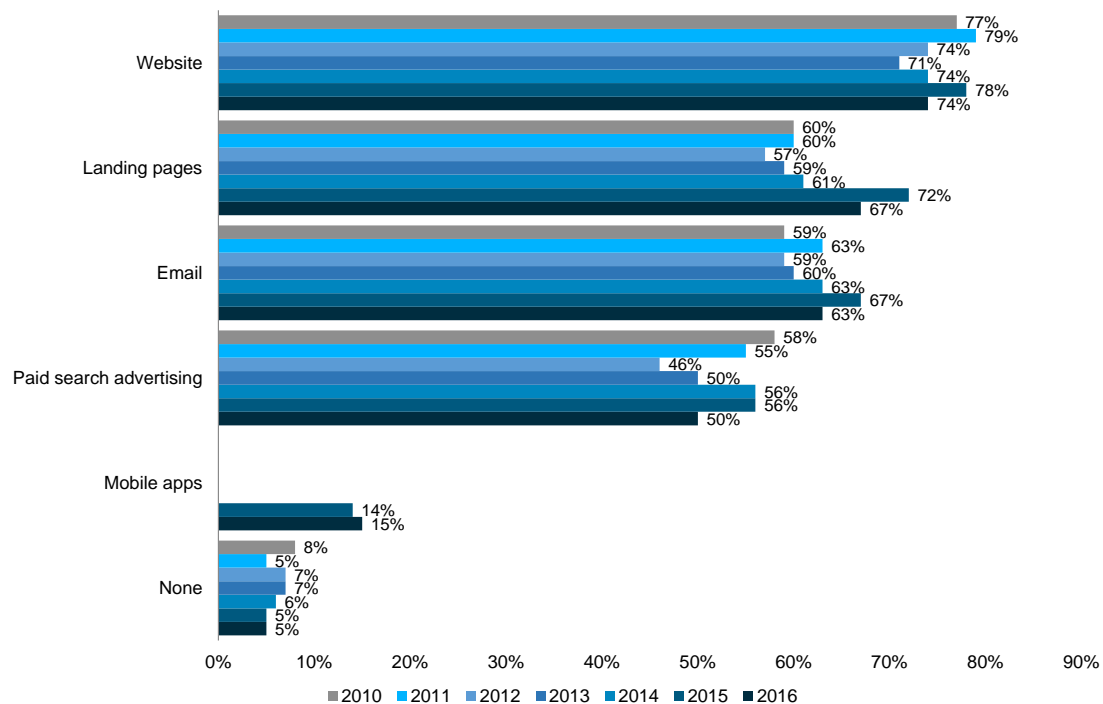
### 4.7.1. Areas of testing

When asked about the areas they test, it becomes apparent that company respondents focus most heavily on their *website* (74%), *landing pages* (67%) and *email* (63%), followed by *paid search advertising* (50%). *Mobile apps* are being tested by only 15% of companies (Figure 24).

The website has consistently been the area tested by most respondents since 2010. In the last year there has been a small decrease (5%) in those testing their *website*, but it remains comfortably the most scrutinized area.

#### Company respondents

Figure 24: What areas do you test?



Respondents 2016: 431 | 2015: 437  
Respondents 2014: 498 | 2013: 380 | 2012: 373 | 2011: 315 | 2010: 289

The theme of a slight drop in testing follows through across the next three most commonly tested options: *landing pages* (-7%), *email* (-6%) and *paid search advertising* (-11%). This follows increases over the previous year or two, so may indicate a levelling out process after a period of heightened interest in testing.

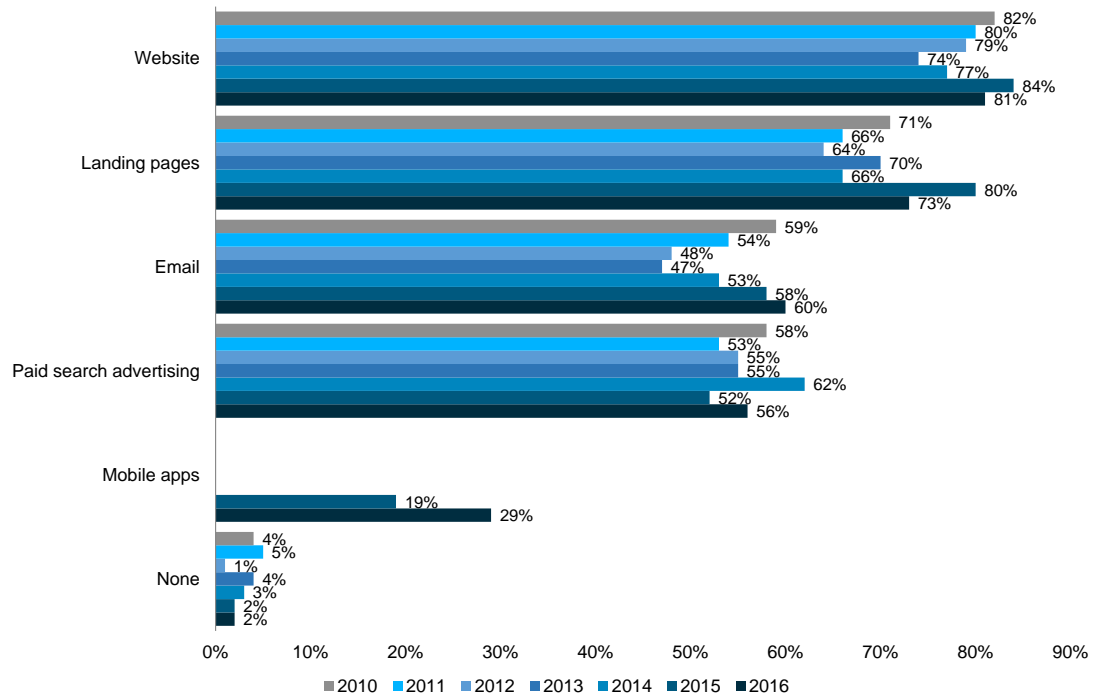
Agency respondents (Figure 25) cite a larger proportion of companies testing *mobile apps*, at 29% compared to 15% of company respondents. This is a 53% increase from 2015, suggesting it's recognized as an area of rising importance.

The discrepancy in proportions testing *mobile apps* may be down to the fact that it's an area being championed by agencies, or that those companies working with agencies are testing across more areas.



## Agency respondents

Figure 25: Typically, what areas do your clients test?



Respondents 2016: 228 | 2015: 259  
Respondents 2014: 323 | 2013: 309 | 2012: 263 | 2011: 249 | 2010: 213

### 4.7.2. Elements of websites tested

Website testing can be broken down into many different elements, all of which can be optimized and make a difference to the overall site. As *Figure 26* and *Figure 27* show, four-fifths of companies (83%) and agency clients (81%) test *call to action buttons*, with a similar proportion testing the *page layout* (79% of companies; 83% of agencies).

*Copy* has seen a shift in proportions testing the area among both companies and agencies, but the shift is reported to be in different directions. There has been an 8% decrease since 2015 in the proportion of companies saying they test their copy, and an 11% increase among agency clients.

One area which has seen a noticeable increase in the number of companies testing this year is *navigation*. In previous years agencies were more likely to cite this as an area of focus, but a 14% increase in the proportion of companies saying

that's the case means there is now only a two percentage point difference between companies (66%) and agency clients (68%).

The increase in navigation and page layout testing clearly shows that companies are embracing a testing and iterative approach to redesign the site or change the information architecture. While there is complexity attached to this, companies who are embracing this method can emerge as winners in terms of their conversion rate.

There are a few other areas in which agencies state that their clients carry out testing in higher numbers than companies themselves indicate. There are 34% more agency clients testing *promotions and offers* than companies. Agencies are also nearly twice more likely to say that their clients test *security fields* (20% compared to 11% of companies).



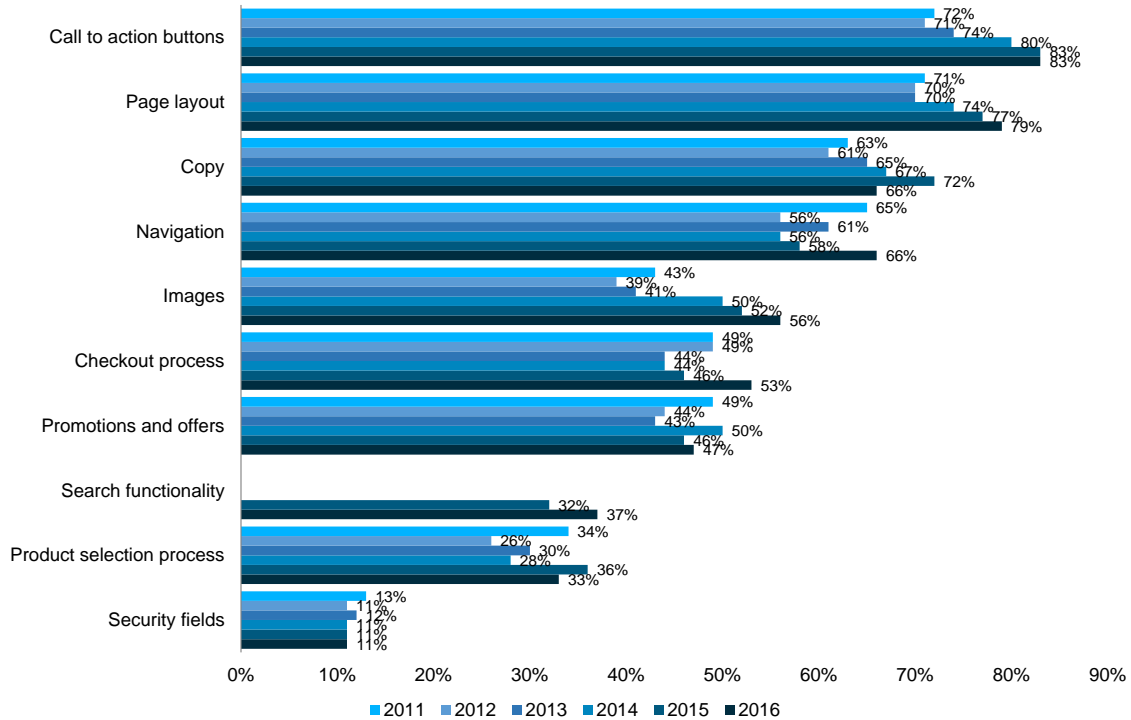
## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“The two biggest growth areas in website testing since last year are navigation and checkout. Those are both core elements of ecommerce sites, and it’s great to see some focusing on those over and above more run-of-the-mill tweaks. It’s slightly strange to see product selection and promotions so far down the list here, as these – along with pricing – often offer the biggest benefits, in particular to retailers.”**

Dan Barker, Independent Consultant

## Company respondents

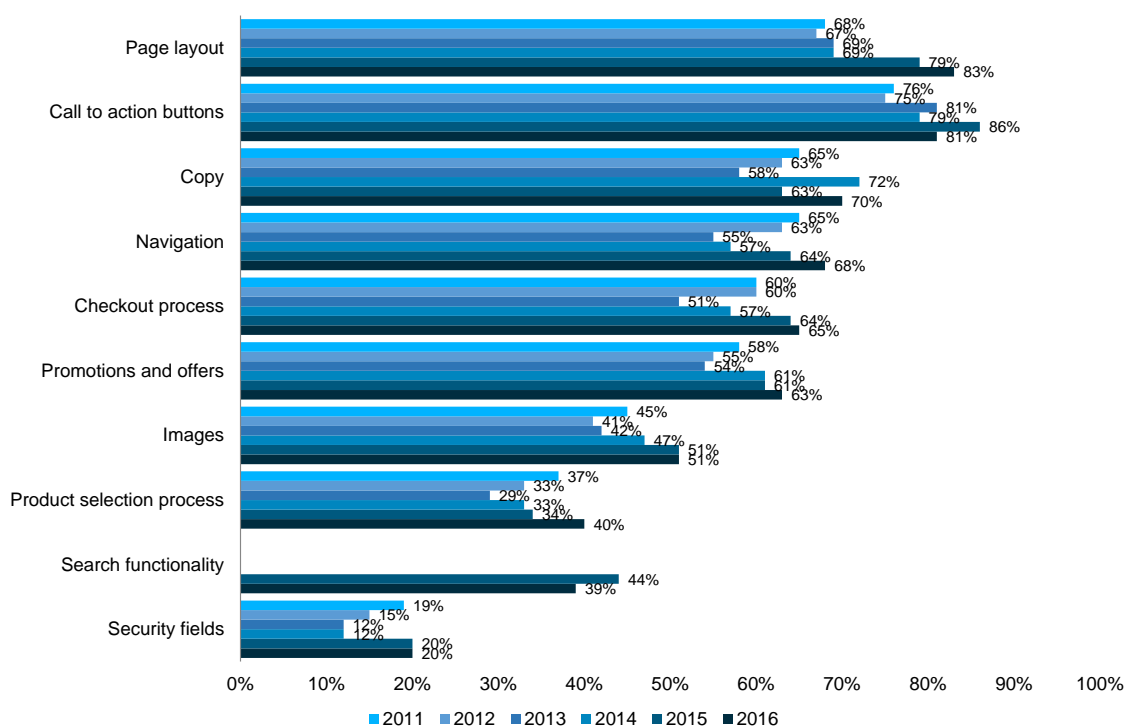
Figure 26: Specifically for your website, what do you test?



Respondents 2016: 316 | 2015: 335  
Respondents 2014: 365 | 2013: 267 | 2012: 270 | 2011: 241

## Agency respondents

Figure 27: What do your clients typically test on their websites?



Respondents 2016: 183 | 2015: 213  
Respondents 2014: 243 | 2013: 226 | 2012: 203 | 2011: 187



### 4.7.3. Number of tests carried out on website per month

As well as what areas are tested, it's important to consider how often testing is carried out, and how frequently this needs to happen to have real impact and allow the most useful analysis and optimization as a result.

The amount of A/B or multivariate tests carried out by respondents on their (or their clients') websites is varied (*Figure 28* and *Figure 29*), but around four-fifths run tests up to five times a month (82% of companies; 83% of agencies).

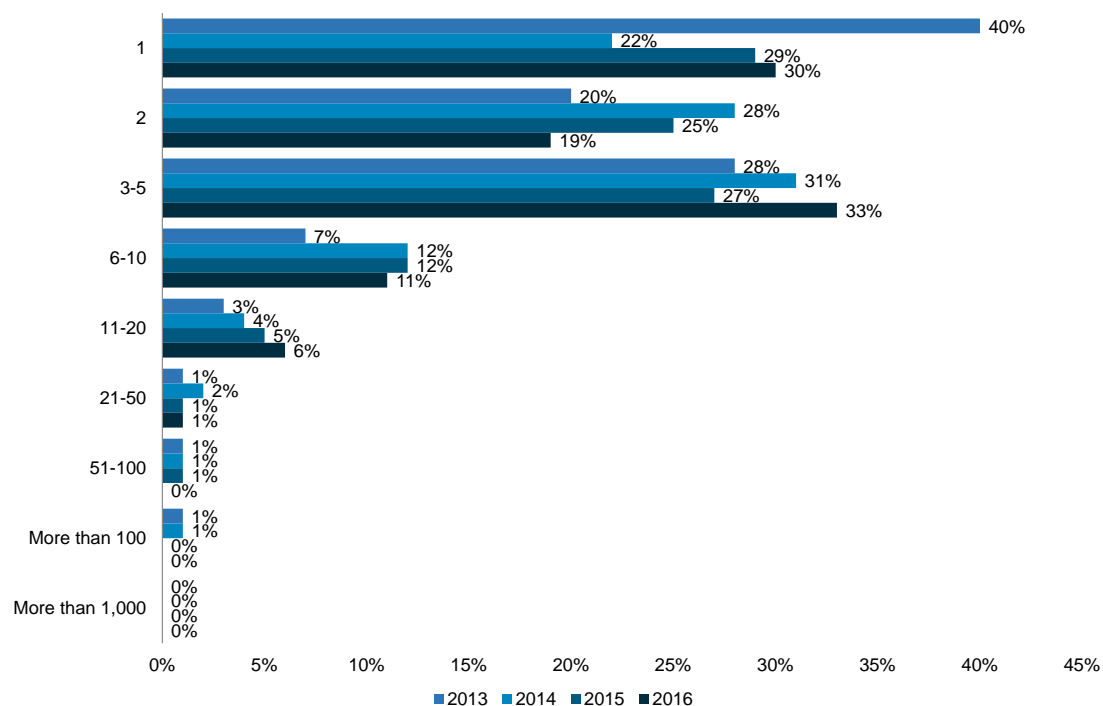
As companies move forward with their CRO maturity model, they are introducing multiple streams of testing focusing on different areas of the site. Companies need to ensure they have the right strategy in place when running multiple streams so that they don't counteract or affect one another.

Just under one third of companies (30%) and a quarter of agency clients (25%) are carrying out testing only once a month. However, this number has dropped considerably over the last four years, implying that more companies are recognising the benefits of more regular testing. It could also be due to the range of options and tools, making it easier for businesses to deploy these tests more often and with more confidence.

**MORE COMPANIES ARE RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS OF MORE REGULAR TESTING.**

#### Company respondents

**Figure 28: On average, how many A/B or multivariate tests do you carry out each month on your website?**

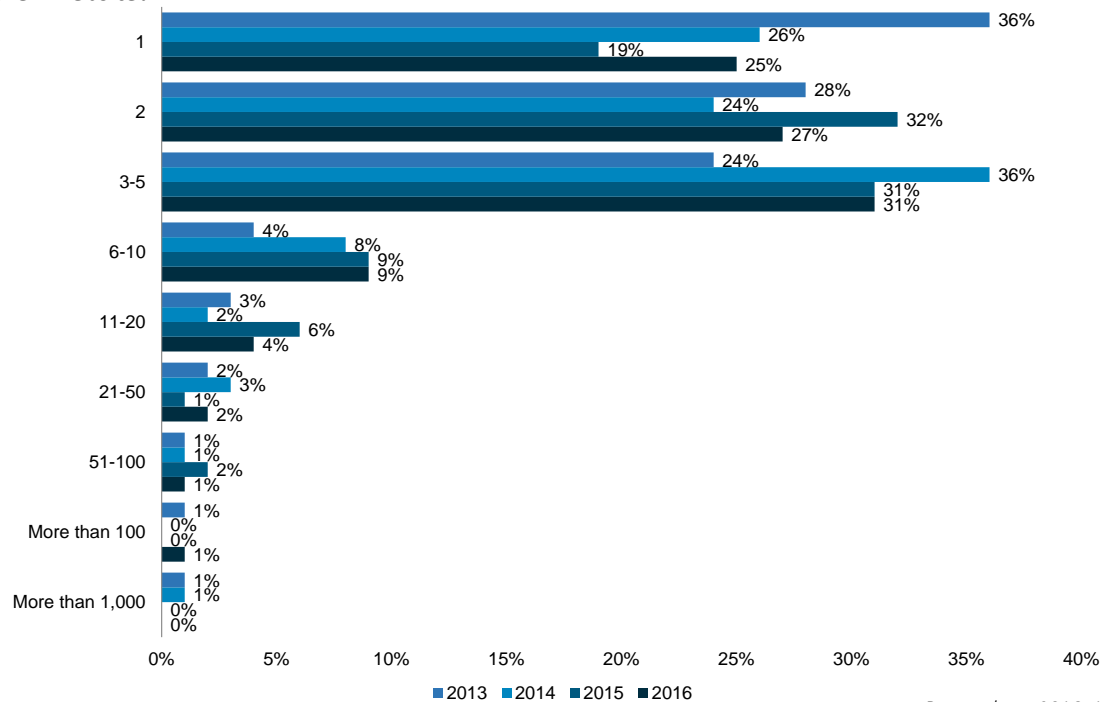


Respondents 2016: 314  
Respondents 2015: 326 | 2014: 359 | 2013: 256

An increase in testing frequency overall is evident. Compared to last year, companies are 11% more likely to say that they run tests at least three times each month, with the proportion of those running between three and five tests increasing by 22%.

## Agency respondents

**Figure 29: On average, how many A/B or multivariate tests do your clients carry out each month on their website?**



Respondents 2016: 179  
Respondents 2015: 212 | 2014: 242 | 2013: 219

### 4.7.4. Ideas for testing

*Analytics* is the most prolific source of ideas for testing among both companies and agency clients (Figure 30 and Figure 31 overleaf). Three-quarters (75%, up by 4% since last year) of companies and nearly two-thirds (65%, up by 8%) of agency clients get ideas for testing from *analytics*.

There has been a noticeable increase (+16%) in the proportion of agencies stating that their clients get ideas for testing from *competitor website analysis*, which takes second place in terms of how many source ideas this way (Figure 31). As well as looking at direct competitors, keeping an eye on other sites across sectors can inspire new and innovative test ideas.

A potential explanation for this increase in popularity is that the offering of competitor website analysis is a 'good sell' for agencies. When

pitching to potential clients, the promise that they can keep an eye on competitors, or help the company to do so, in order to help have an edge over said competition would be an attractive proposition.

A clear discrepancy arises between company and agency respondents when it comes to the matter of using *consultants* as a source to find ideas for testing. Close to two-fifths (39%) of agencies cite consultants as a source for their clients, but this is true for only 14% of companies.

There is evidence of agreement between the two sets of respondents that *boss / 'HIPPO' suggestions* and *third-party agencies* are low down on the inspiration scale, falling within the bottom three sources for both groups. However, *employee suggestions* cause more of a difference of opinion, with the method ranking in third place for companies but only seventh for agencies.



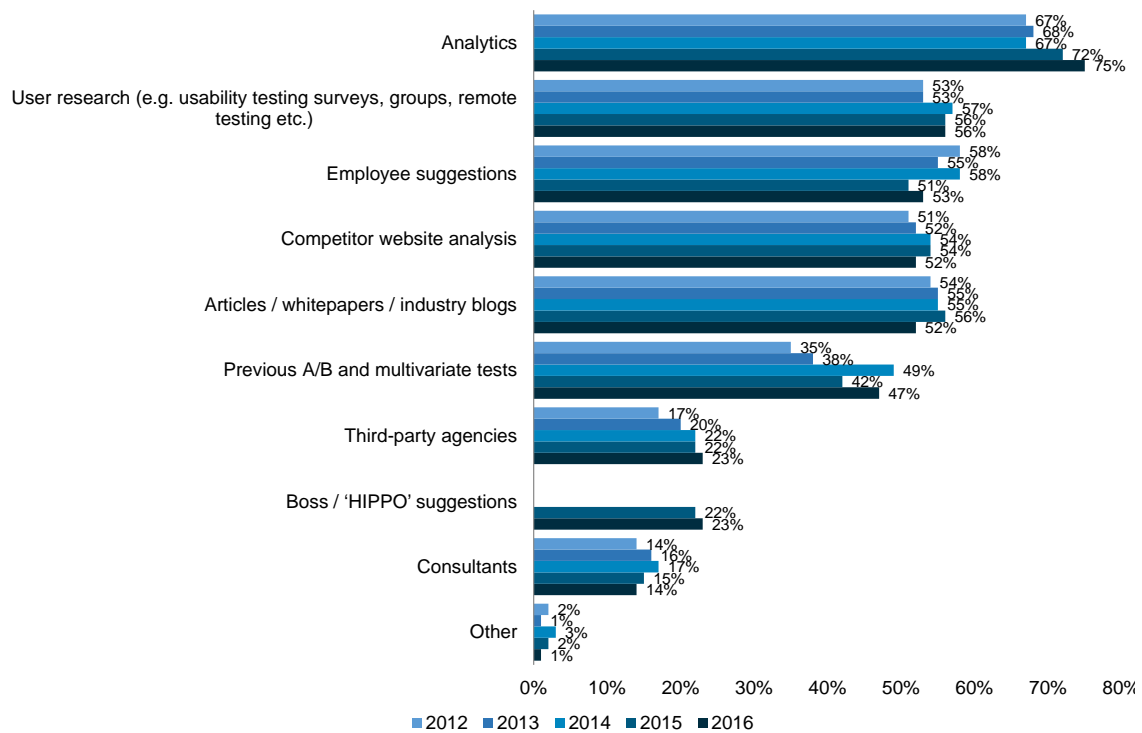
## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

"Analytics continues to grow as the largest source of test ideas. It has always been the number-one source among survey respondents, but has shot up even higher over the last couple of years. The big four on the list here can be broadly summarised as: data, customers, employees, competitors. Previous tests is still fairly low on the list here, which is a little sad as it indicates few are systematically taking learnings from tests and maximizing their results."

Dan Barker, Independent Consultant

## Company respondents

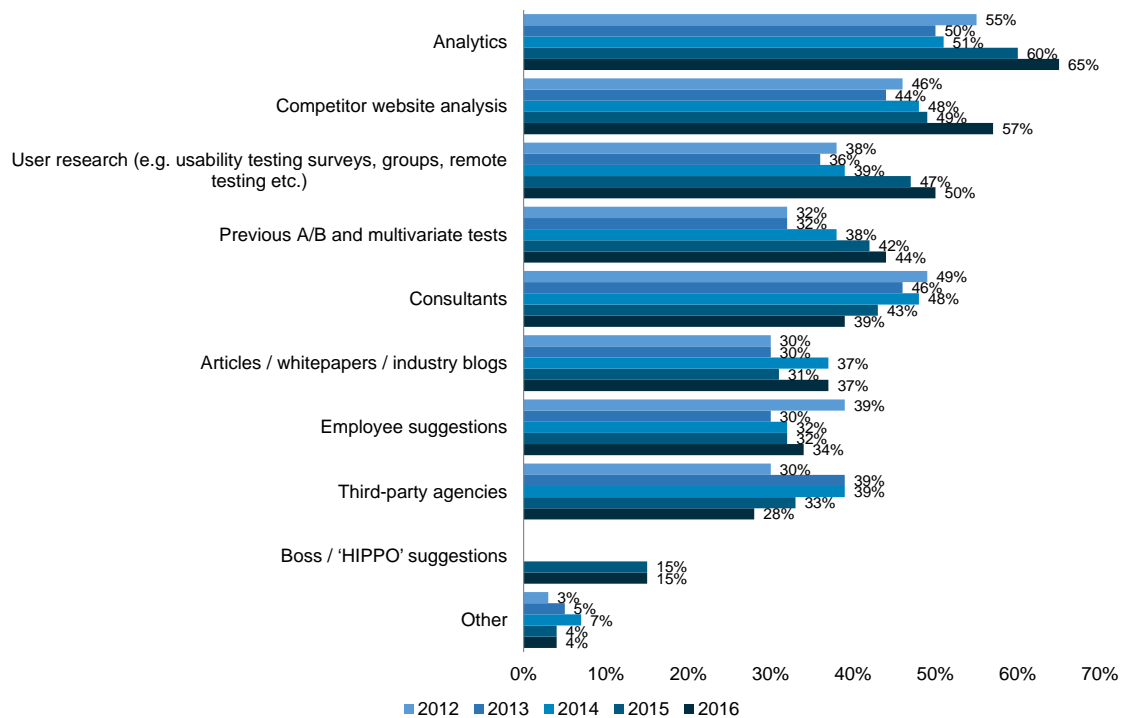
Figure 30: Where do you get your ideas for testing?



Respondents 2016: 410 | 2015: 419  
Respondents 2014: 478 | 2013: 339 | 2012: 228

## Agency respondents

Figure 31: Where do your clients typically get their ideas for testing?



Respondents 2016: 221 | 2015: 248  
Respondents 2014: 314 | 2013: 282 | 2012: 254

#### 4.7.5. Testing methods by channel

*Usability testing* is used by over half of respondents across all four channels featured in *Figure 32*, with most using this method for their mobile apps (60%).

*A/B testing* is also used relatively highly across the board, although there are significantly fewer respondents using this method when testing their mobile apps (41%). It is most heavily used on desktop websites (76%).

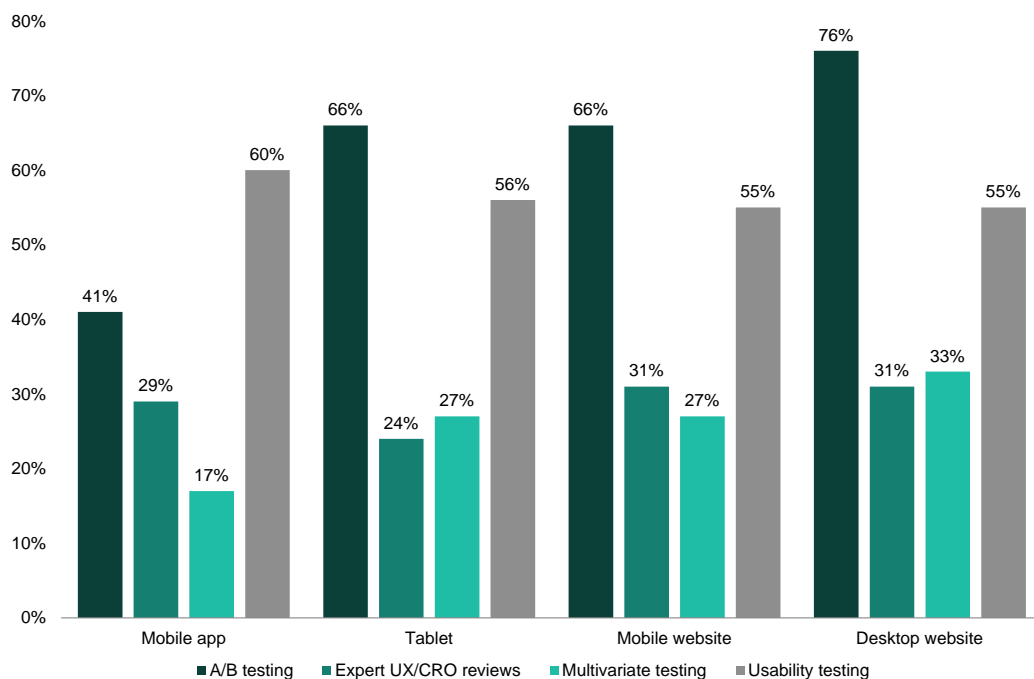
*Expert UX/CRO reviews* and *multivariate testing* are performed by lower numbers of respondents, but clearly have their uses across all four channels. Approximately a third of respondents are testing in this way on their desktop websites (31% and 33% respectively). *Expert UX/CRO reviews* appear to be in favour when it comes to mobile, too, with 29% running these tests for their mobile apps and 31% for their mobile websites.

**TWO IN FIVE COMPANIES  
ARE USING A/B TESTING  
FOR THEIR MOBILE APPS.**



#### Company respondents

**Figure 32: What testing methods are you performing on the following channels?**



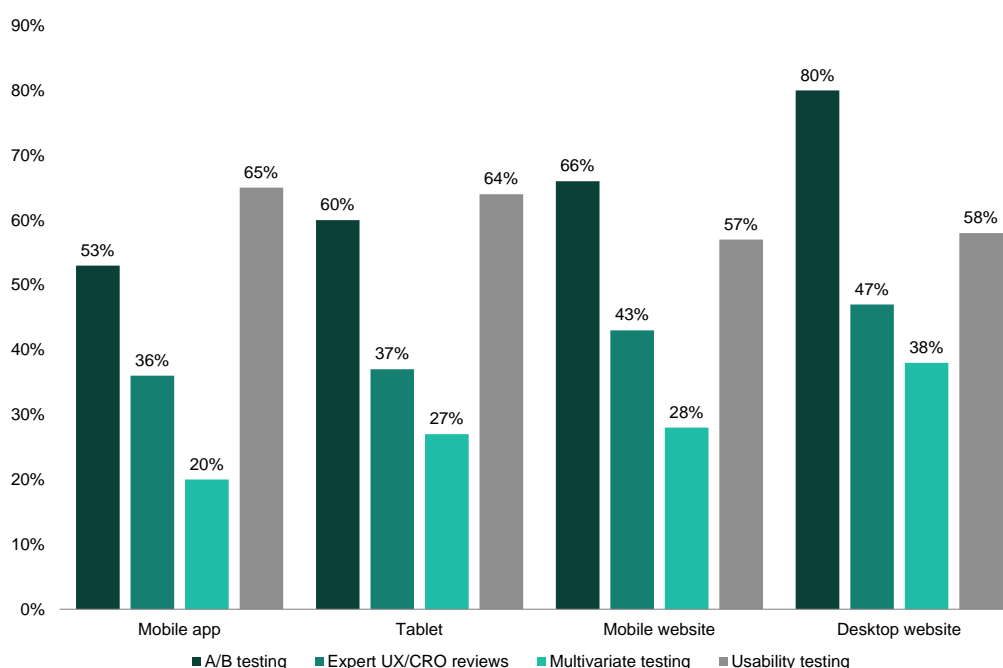
Respondents: 324

Agency results display similar patterns (Figure 33), with *usability testing* being used widely on mobile apps (65%) and across the three other channels. *A/B testing* is also popular, with four-fifths (80%) of agencies reporting that their clients use this method on their desktop websites.

According to agencies, *multivariate testing* is being used the least across all four channels, which suggests that other methods are more in favour and can present more useful results. However, the proportion of agency clients who do use this method is still fairly large (20% or higher), showing it has some significance, especially when used in conjunction with other methods of testing.

### Agency respondents

**Figure 33: What testing methods are your clients performing on the following channels?**



Respondents: 195

### 4.7.6. Complexity of testing

For the first time in this year's report, respondents were also asked about the complexity of the tests their organizations or clients are carrying out.

'Simple' tests are run with most frequency, which is understandable as they will take least effort to deploy and most likely cost little. Over two-fifths (44%) of companies run these frequently, and a further 31% at least occasionally (Figure 34).

'Highly complex' tests are run frequently by less than one in ten companies (7%), but 64% do use them to some extent. Tests of 'medium complexity' are used at least occasionally by 69% of respondents, implying that many hope to get a little more than only the results of a simple test on a fairly consistent basis.

Nearly two-fifths (36%) of companies carrying out frequent 'complex' or 'highly complex' tests report that they are satisfied (either 'very' or 'quite') with their conversion rates. This compares to only 22% of those who rarely or never run complex tests.

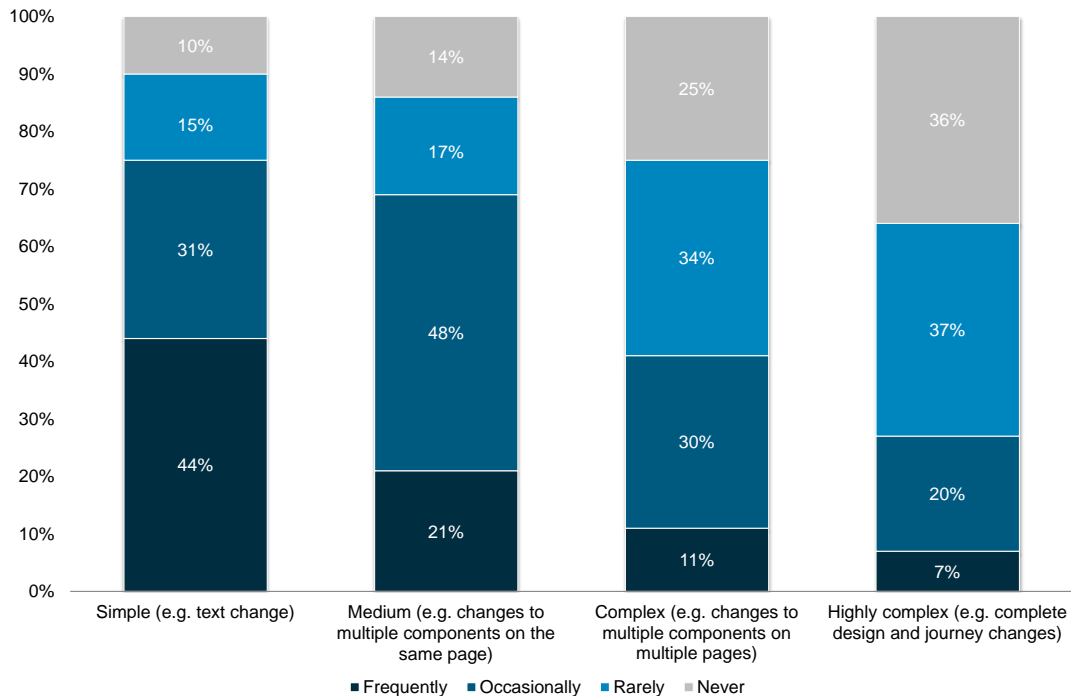
Additionally, organizations that frequently run 'complex' or 'highly complex' tests are more than twice as likely to experience a 'significant increase' in sale as those who rarely or never run these types of tests (39% compared to 16%).

In order to become the industry leader, companies need to try out innovative ways to turn users into customers. This can mean implementing highly complex tests that require additional resource to be in place, but companies who are taking that risk in a 'fail fast' approach are starting to see the return of implementing the highly complex tests. To gain the upper hand, more companies are likely to start running highly complex tests rather than just simple CTA changes.

Agency results (Figure 35) paint a similar picture, with 'simple' tests happening most frequently, and 'highly complex' tests least. However, 79% say their clients run medium-complexity tests at least occasionally, compared to 69% of companies saying that's the case.

### Company respondents

**Figure 34: At each level of complexity, how often do you run tests?**

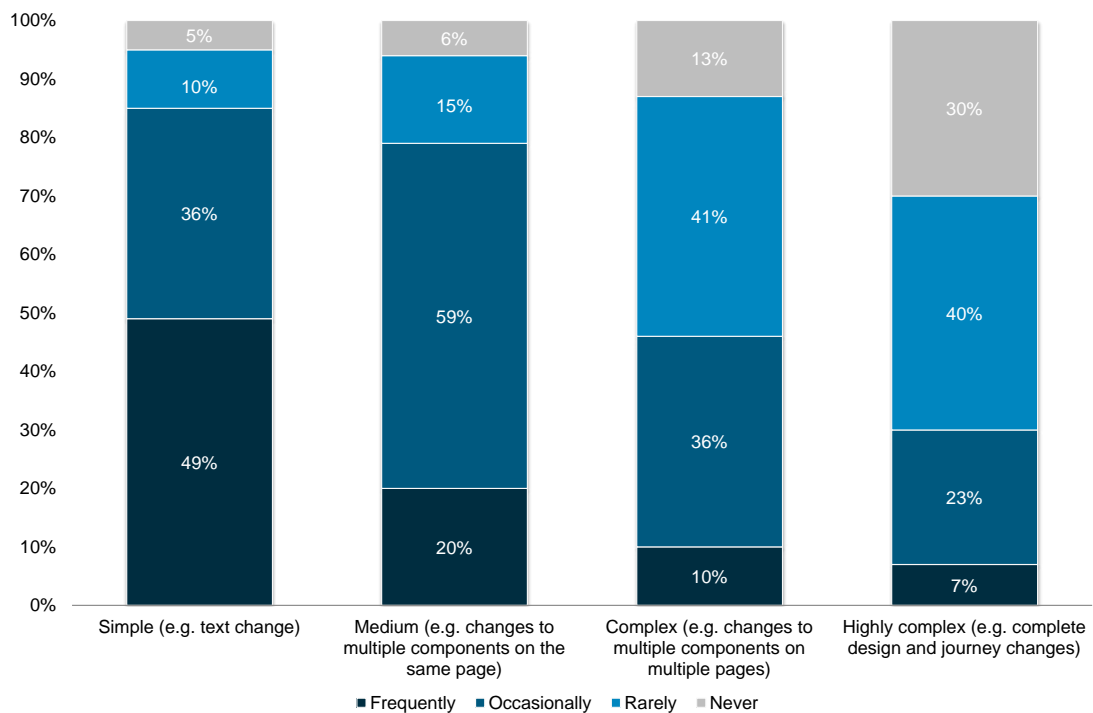


Respondents: 365

Note: This is a new question for the 2016 report, so there is no trend data

### Agency respondents

**Figure 35: At each level of complexity, how often do your clients typically run tests?**



Respondents: 203

Note: This is a new question for the 2016 report, so there is no trend data



## 4.8. Personalization

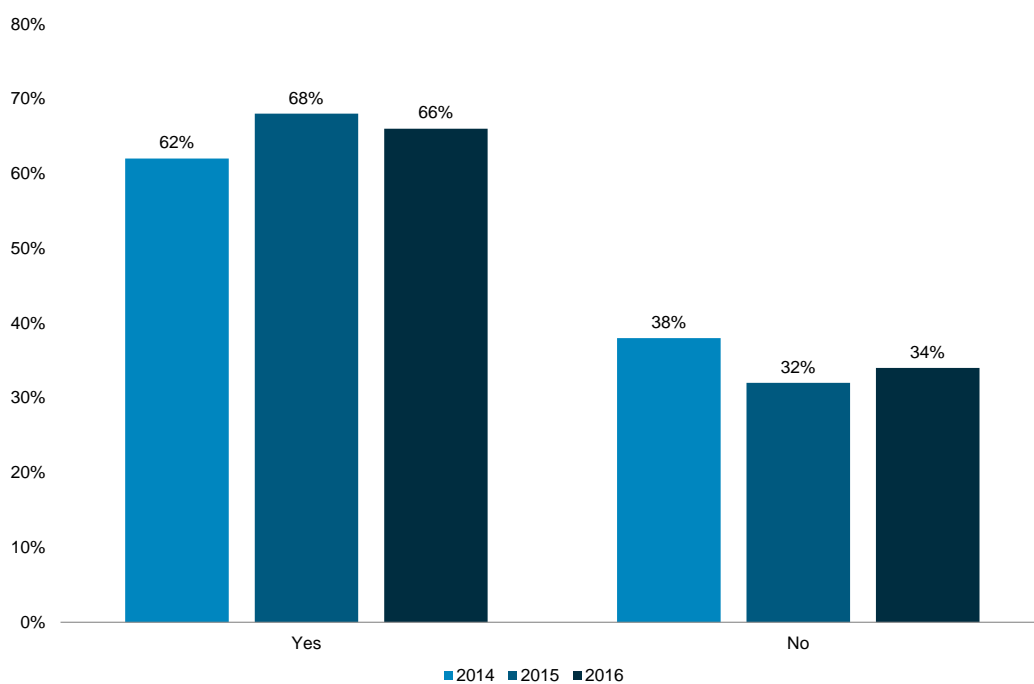
### 4.8.1. Extent of personalization

Two-thirds (66%) of companies are undertaking some form of personalization, which is overall a 6% increase over the last two years (*Figure 36*).

This number is higher among agencies (*Figure 37*), who report that 75% of their clients are engaging in personalization in some way. Agency respondents have displayed a far more noticeable shift in this area, with a 25% increase in the proportion of those saying their clients use personalization over the past two years.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 36: Do you undertake any form of personalization in your marketing activity?**

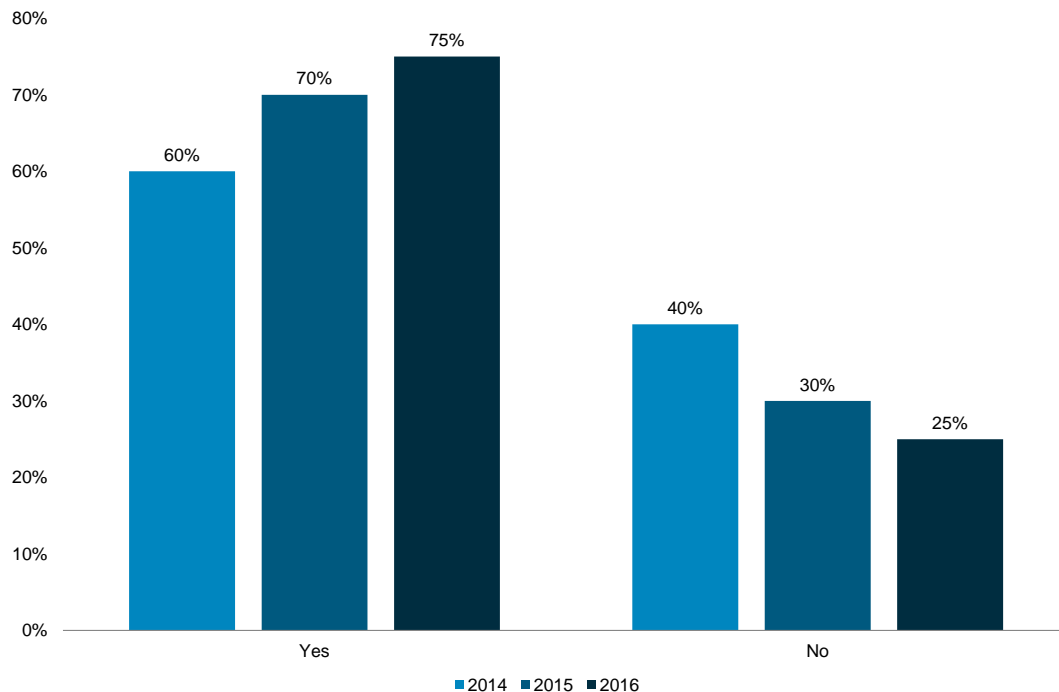


Respondents 2016: 410  
Respondents 2015: 421 | 2014: 480



### Agency respondents

**Figure 37: Do your clients typically undertake any form of personalization in their marketing activity?**



Respondents 2016: 220  
Respondents 2015: 249 | 2014: 314

### 4.8.2. Channels through which companies are personalizing

*Email* is the channel through which most respondents personalize, with 88% of companies and 92% of agency clients personalizing here (Figure 38 and Figure 39). This is a significantly higher number than those seen across the other channels featured in these charts. Personalizing through the *website* is the second most common method, used by 45% of companies and 57% of agency clients.

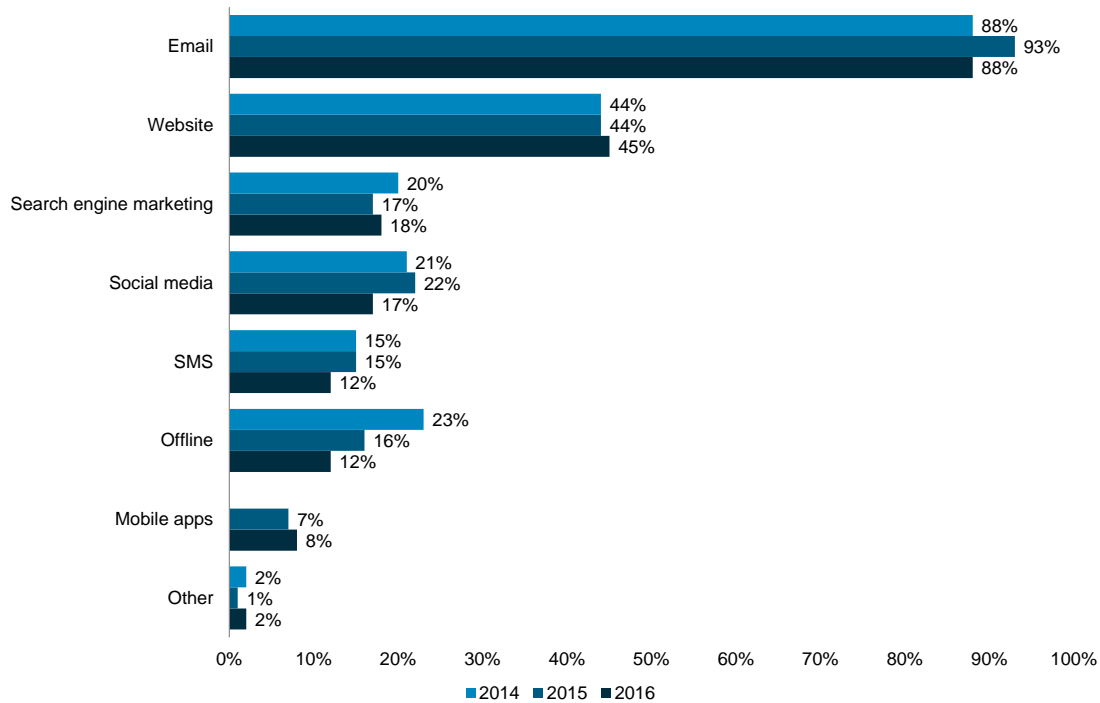
The proportion of agencies saying their clients personalize their *search engine marketing* activities has increased by 45% since 2014, and 47% more agency clients are personalizing through *mobile apps* (compared to 2015).

Fewer companies have been placing emphasis on *offline* personalization, where numbers have nearly halved in the last two years. Only personalization through the *website*, *search engine marketing* and *mobile apps* has seen marginal increases. Companies are probably beginning to realize where their strengths are, and through which channels they are gaining the best returns from their efforts.



### Company respondents

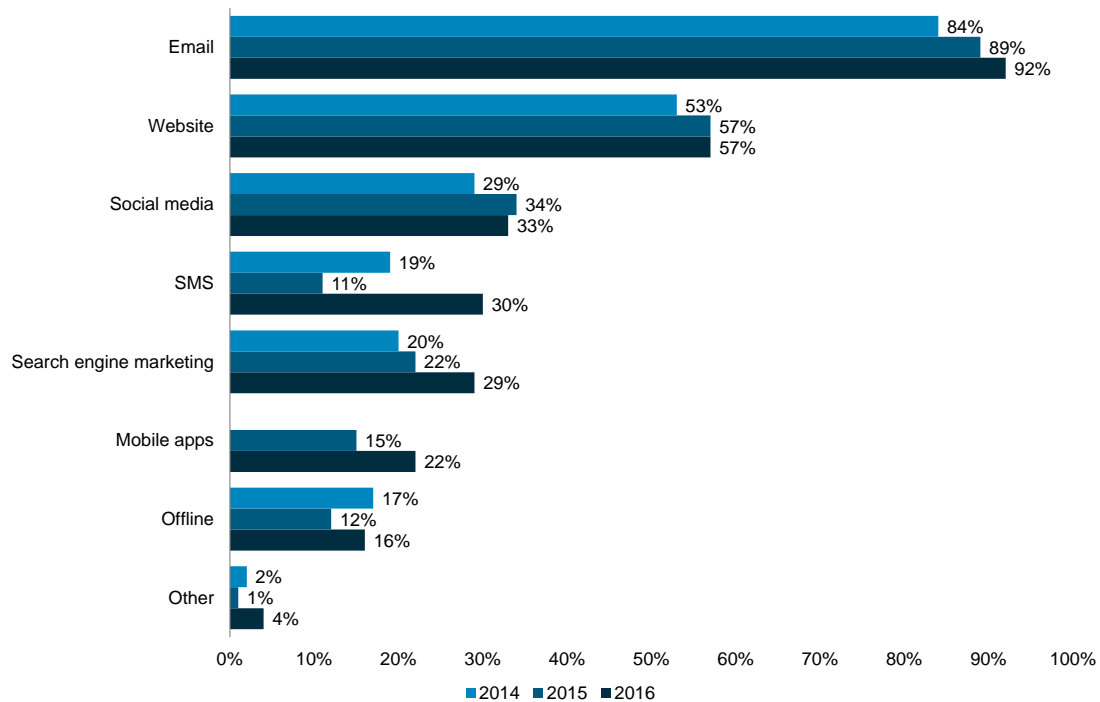
Figure 38: Through which channels do you personalize?



Respondents 2016: 252  
Respondents 2015: 269 | 2014: 280

### Agency respondents

Figure 39: Through which channels do your clients typically personalize?



Respondents 2016: 140  
Respondents 2015: 152 | 2014: 168

### 4.8.3. Impact since implementing personalization

*Search engine marketing* has shown the best results for those implementing personalization through this channel, with 48% experiencing a 'major uplift' in conversion rates as a result (Figure 40). *Social media* and *offline* personalization are resulting in some level of uplift for the vast majority (both 89%) of respondents.

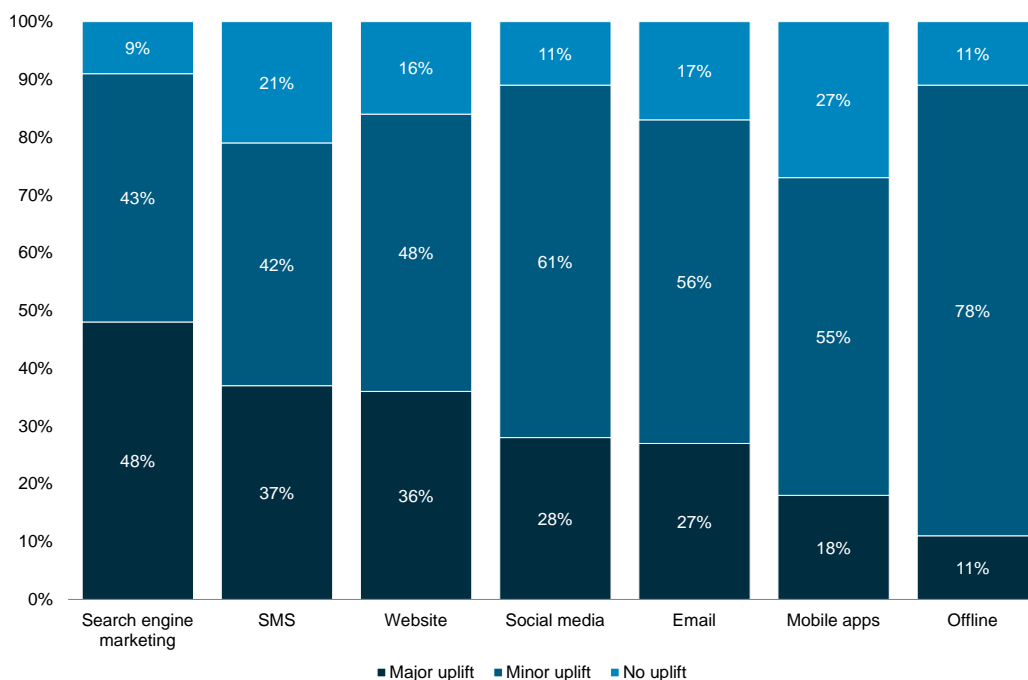
There is still work to do when it comes to personalization through *mobile apps*, as around a quarter (27%) of those personalizing through this

channel are seeing no uplift in their conversion rates.

It is encouraging to see that five of the given options have displayed an increase in the proportion of respondents labelling them as leading to a 'major uplift' in conversion rates (Figure 41). When it comes to *website* personalization, there has been a 71% increase in the proportion of those seeing a 'major uplift' over the last two years, and a 50% increase for *search engine marketing*.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 40: Have you experienced an uplift in conversion rates through any of these channels since implementing personalization?**



Respondents: 212

The proportion of those seeing a 'major uplift' as a result of personalization via *SMS* has increased by 48% since the 2014 survey (Figure 41), following a decline last year. *Email*, too, has risen by 17% over the last two years, with *social media* climbing steadily.

Following a surge in 2015, responding organizations are now 70% less likely to experience a 'major uplift' in conversion rates as a result of *offline* personalization, and *mobile apps* have seen a 33% decrease since last year.

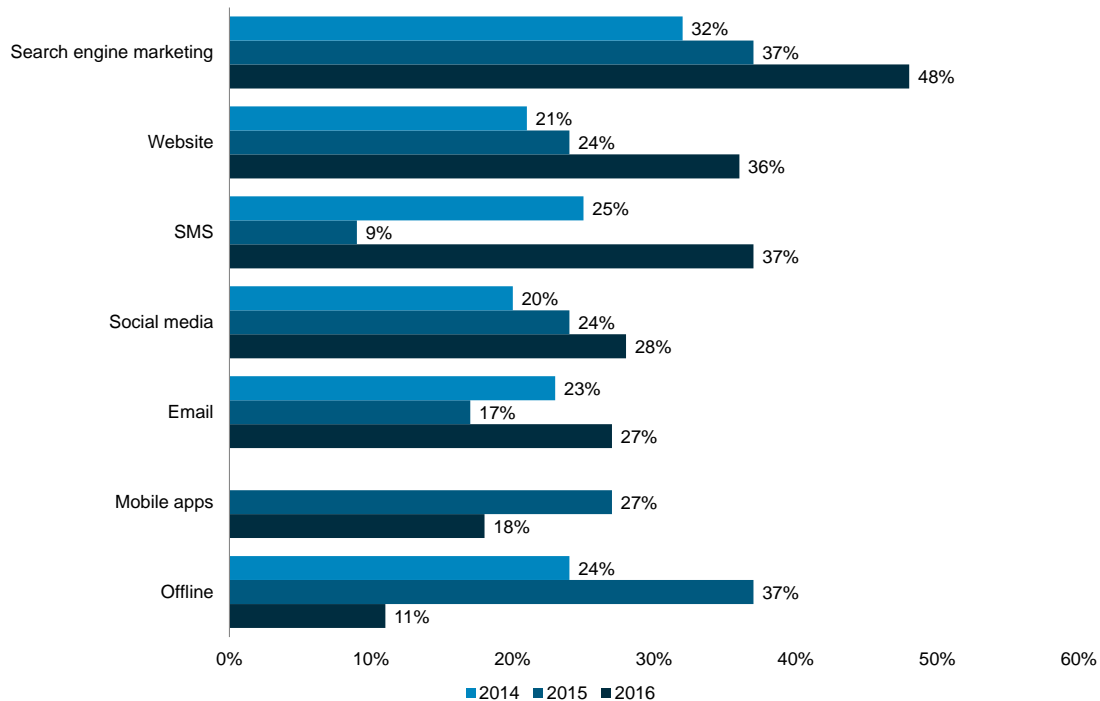
**WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY**

**"Personalizing search marketing has had a 'major uplift' for 48% of respondents who say they use the technique. If you're working in-house at a company and looking for new tests to carry out, it's likely worth diverting a little of your effort away from your website and across to search marketing."**

Dan Barker, Independent Consultant

### Company respondents

**Figure 41: Proportion of companies saying they have experienced a 'major uplift' through these channels since implementing personalization**



Respondents 2016: 212  
2015: 237 | 2014: 238

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“The majority of companies utilizing personalization have seen a major uplift in the conversion rate of their SEM channels and we can see this number has continued to improve significantly over the last three years. Using symmetric messaging and other personalization techniques to improve the visitor’s experience when first landing on a site is fundamental, as this is when their attention is shortest. The uplift in conversion rates for SEM channels has a direct link to revenue savings and can free up spend for further investment in SEM or other company initiatives.”**

Tai Rattigan, Head of Partnerships EMEA,  
Optimizely

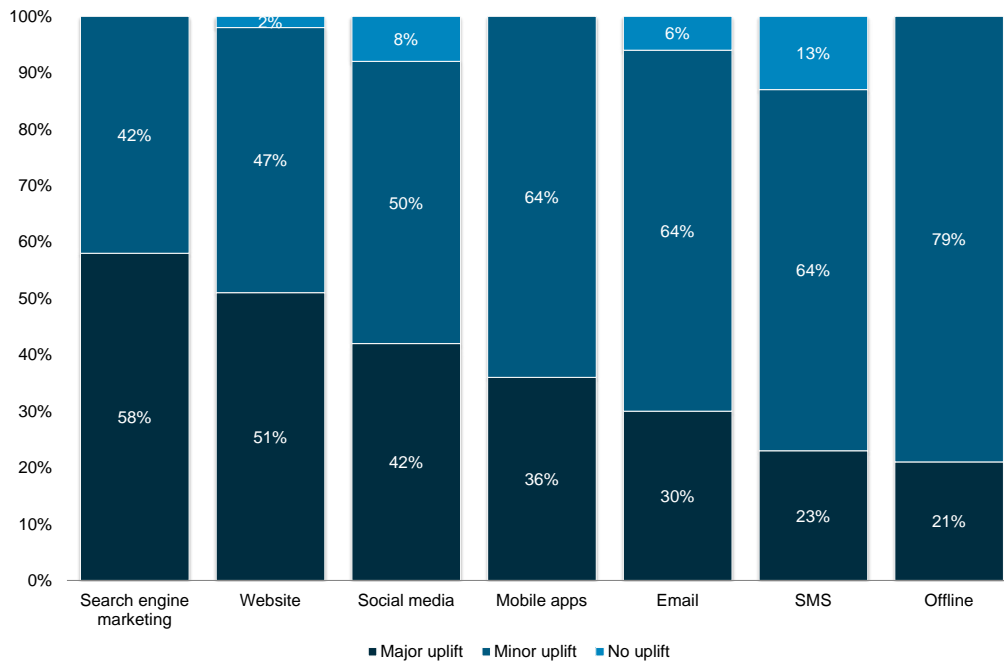
Agency respondents are more positive overall when considering the impact of personalization on conversion rates for their clients (*Figure 42*). *Search engine marketing*, *mobile apps* and *offline* efforts are resulting in some form of uplift in conversion rates for all clients using these channels, with the least successful channel, *SMS*, still only showing no results for 13% of users (*Figure 42*).

It could be that, with agency advice, clients are deploying effective optimization strategies on the channels that are more likely to reap rewards. Agencies will be required to show results, and so it stands to reason that they are spending time and effort in the places where uplift will be seen, and advising clients away from the channels not showing positive results.

Personalization through *search engine marketing* and *social media* has seen an increase in the proportion of agency clients seeing major uplifts in conversion rates over the last year, but on other channels this enthusiasm is dwindling (*Figure 43*).

### Agency respondents

**Figure 42: Have your clients experienced an uplift in conversion rates through any of these channels since implementing personalization?**



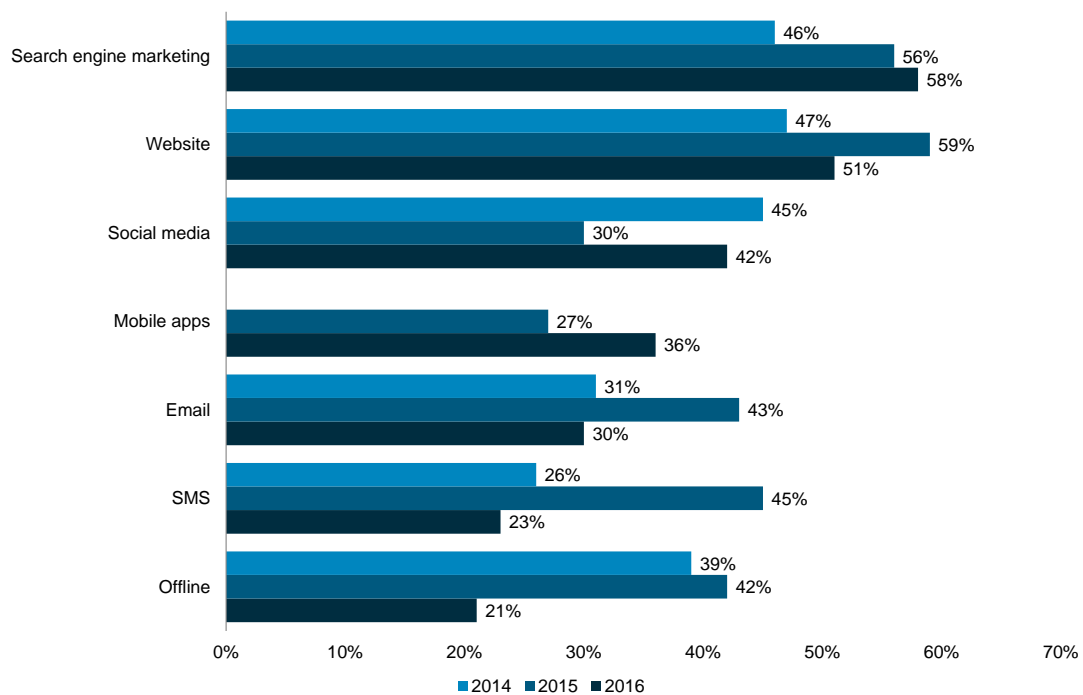
Respondents: 124

There has been a 50% decrease in the proportion of those reporting a 'major uplift' through *offline personalization*, a 30% decrease for *email* and 14% for *website* personalization.

Agencies are twice as likely as their client-side counterparts to see major uplifts in conversion rates as a result of personalization through *mobile apps* (36% compared to 18%).

### Agency respondents

**Figure 43: Proportion of agencies saying their clients have experienced a 'major uplift' through these channels since implementing personalization**



Respondents 2016: 124  
2015: 131 | 2014: 140

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Do you have any examples of how you (or your clients) are personalizing the experience by joining up online and offline?

“Items purchased in store are used to segment shoppers for email marketing, meaning we can better target with specific campaigns.”

“Our email CRM campaigns are in sync with our on-demand personal printed flyers to customers on their birthdays and similar.”

“Our web-based analytics feeds our CRM so our offline telesales operators have better information to personalize the selling experience.”

“Purchases made by a customer in store appear in their online order history. In the future, personalized recommendations will be made based on this purchase history.”

“We use a CRM system so we can send emails based on shopping habits, both online and offline.”

“Adding in performance/conversion data from offline direct marketing efforts to digital personalization efforts.”

“Integrating offline data into custom audience campaigns. Running segmented email and social campaigns and tracking them back to online actions.”

#### 4.8.4. Areas of the website being personalized

Personalization entails a whole range of techniques and areas where changes can be made. On a website alone, there are innumerable elements which could potentially be tweaked and personalized, and companies must decide where to spend their time and budget.

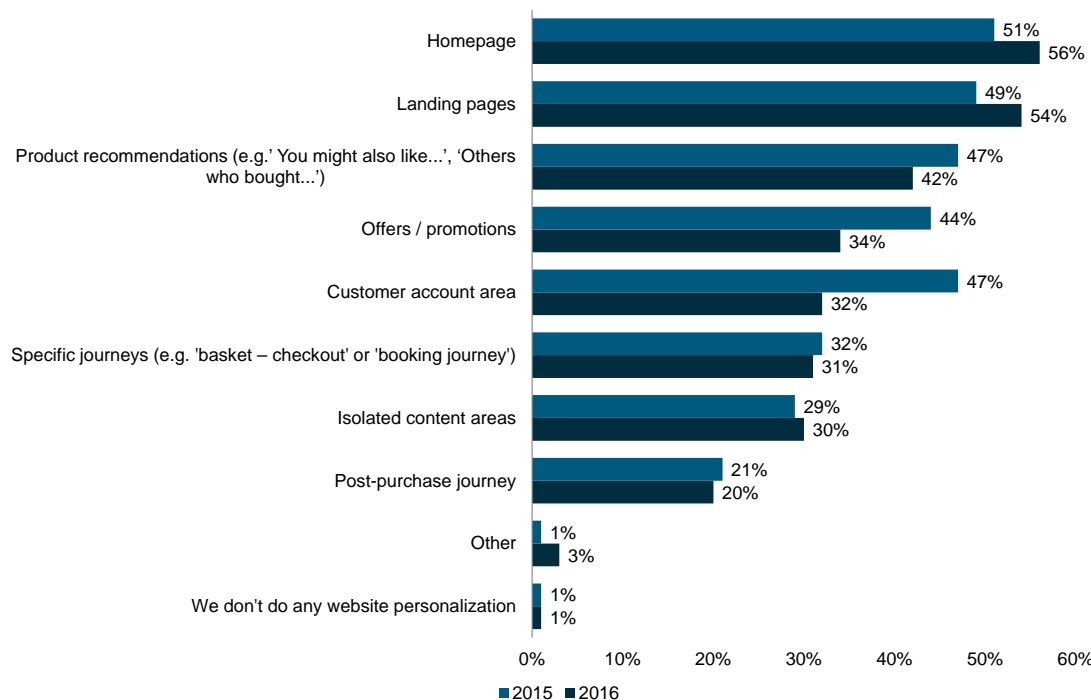
When asked which areas of their website were being personalized, *landing pages* were ranked in second place for both companies and agency clients, but this personalization is being done by only 54% of companies compared to 75% of agency clients (*Figure 44* and *Figure 45*). The *homepage* is given the most focus by companies, whereas for agency clients this comes in fifth place.

Another website element where companies and agency clients are making differing decisions is the *customer account area*. While agencies report a 43% increase in the proportion of clients who are personalizing this, companies are 32% less likely to say that's the case.



#### Company respondents

Figure 44: What areas of your website do you personalize?

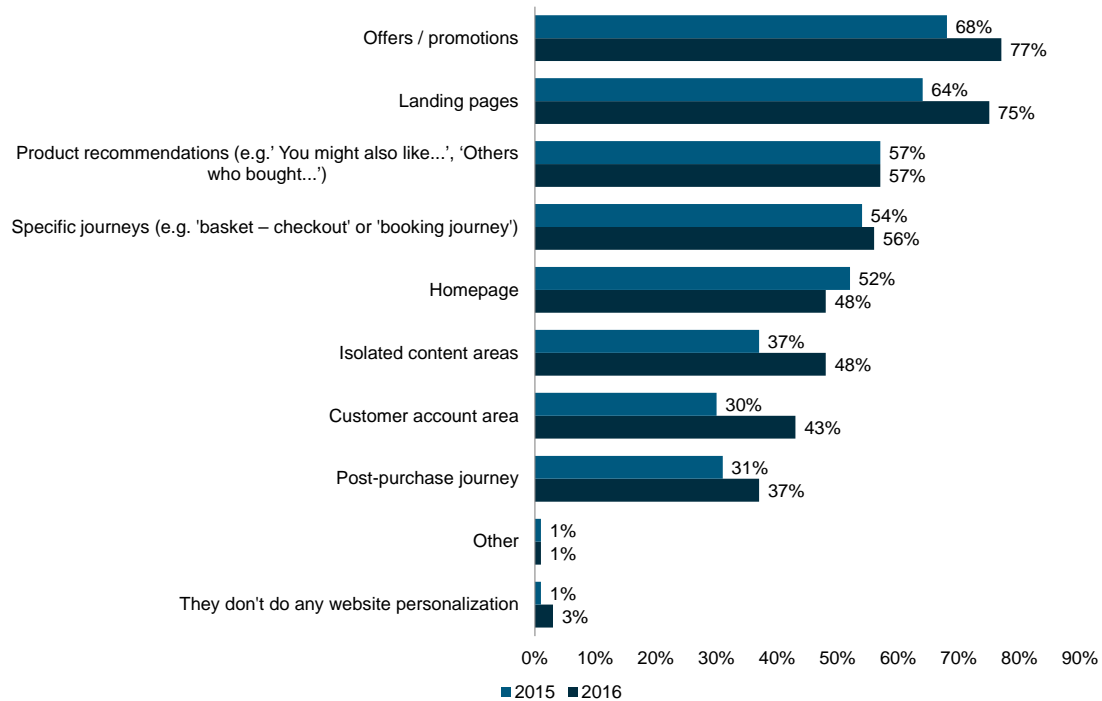


Respondents 2016: 108  
Respondents 2015: 108



#### Agency respondents

Figure 45: What areas of their website do your clients typically personalize?



Respondents 2016: 75  
Respondents 2015: 81

#### 4.8.5. Use of data in website personalization

Successful personalization can only be implemented when working with a sturdy dataset, and respondents were asked about their data strategies specifically for the purpose of personalization. Over half of respondents (54% of companies; 57% of agencies) have a defined strategy straddling online and offline, suggesting their data collection is following a clear process.

Although there are still a significant proportion of companies with no defined strategy for collecting data which can later be used for personalization, there has been an increase over the last year in the proportion of organizations that do. Compared to last year, both companies and agencies are more likely to say they (or their clients) have a defined strategy in place (up by 4% and 12% respectively).



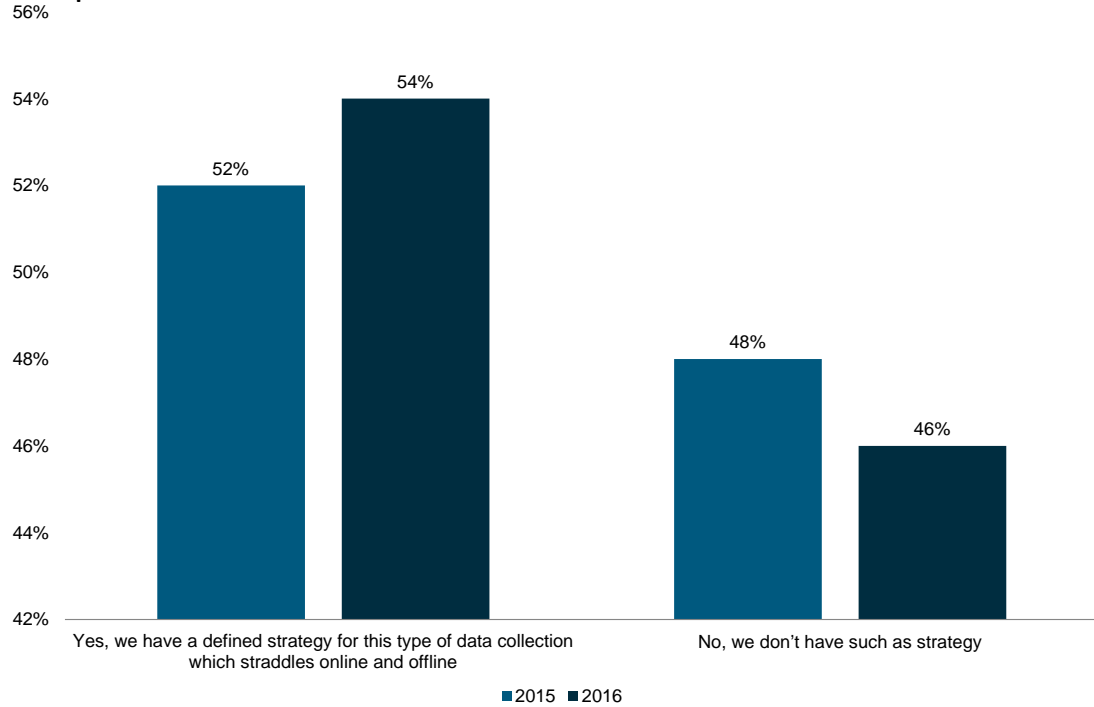
#### WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“Personalization is becoming a bigger part of the CRO toolkit and rightly so. However, implementing a sound layer of data to power the types of personalization marketers are looking for remains a challenge. With software providers enabling marketers to better tailor communications with customers across multiple devices, it is still a very arduous process to create a single source of data to power a strong personalization programme.”**

Depesh Mandalia, CMO, toucanBox

#### Company respondents

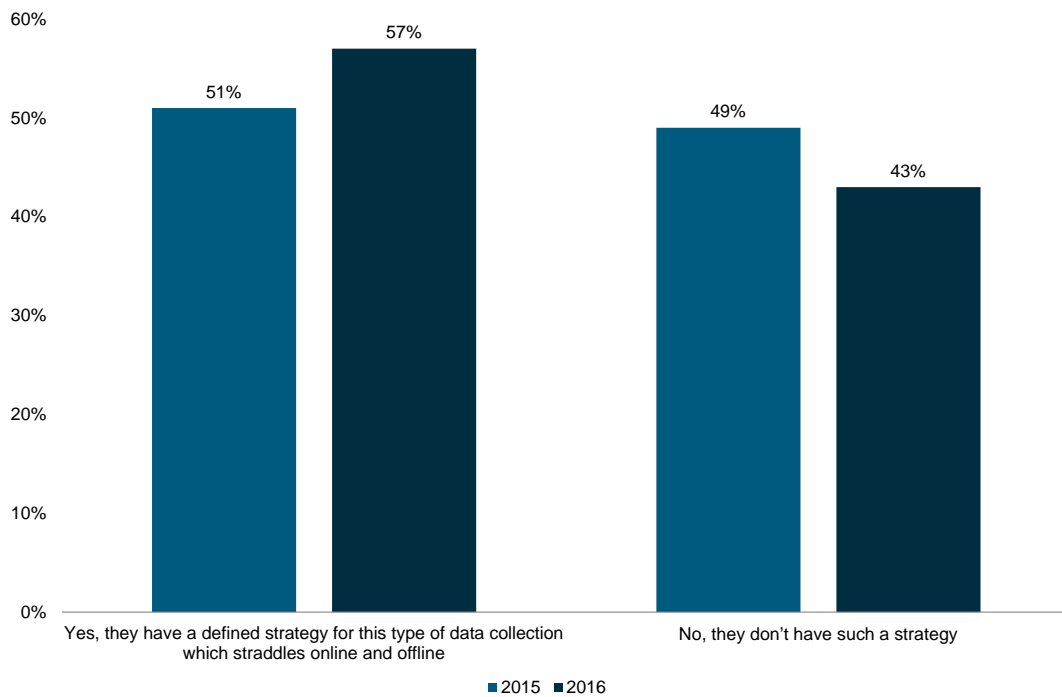
**Figure 46: Do you have a defined strategy or process for collecting customer data which can later be used for personalization?**



Respondents 2016: 240  
Respondents 2015: 254

#### Agency respondents

**Figure 47: Do your clients have a defined strategy or process for collecting customer data which can later be used for personalization?**



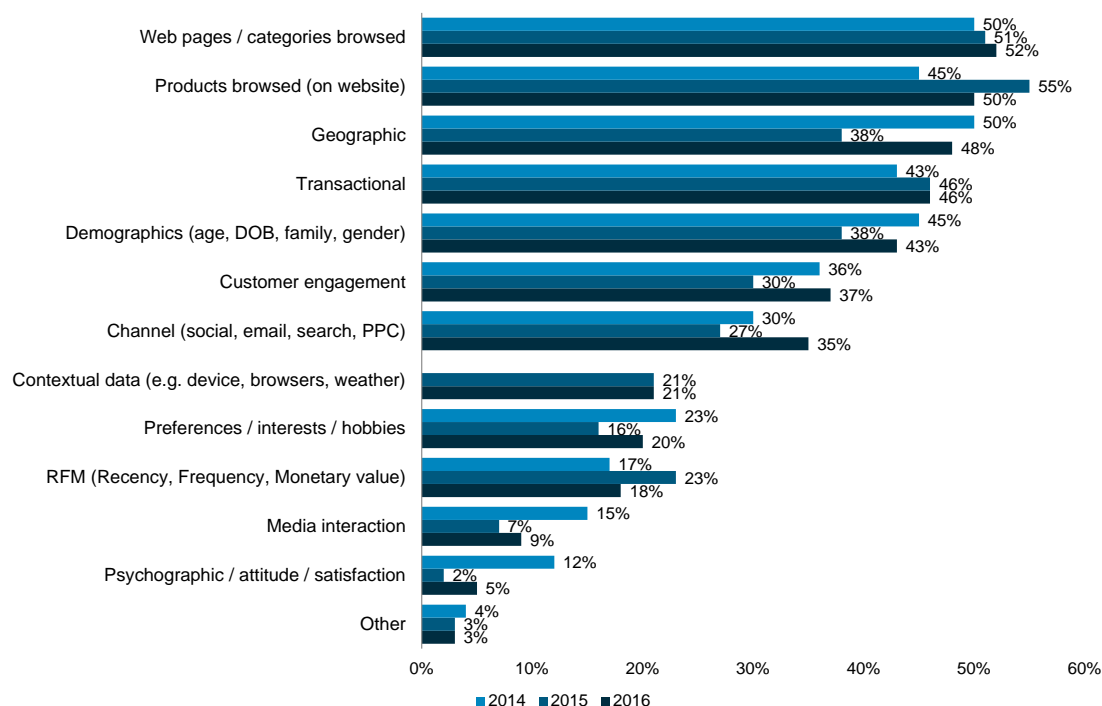
Respondents 2016: 131  
Respondents 2015: 144

There is a wealth of data to choose from when experimenting with personalization, and it is important to determine which data provides the most relevant information. Personalizing website content based on geography will create an entirely different outcome to personalization based on transactional data, so a crucial step in the process is deciding on the aims of personalization and considering which datasets will help to lead to the best results.

Most types of data featured in *Figure 48* have risen in popularity this year, with companies being more likely to use them to personalize their website content. Usage of *web pages / categories browsed* has overtaken *products browsed (on website)* by a small margin, but both are still used by half of respondents (52% and 50% respectively).

### Company respondents

**Figure 48: Which of the following data do you use to personalize your website content?**



Respondents 2016: 104  
Respondents 2015: 105 | 2014: 113

*Transactional* and *geographic* data are most commonly used for personalization by agency clients (both 64%), with *products browsed* (57%) and *web pages / categories browsed* (56%) remaining high on the priority list (*Figure 49*).

*Geographic* (+33%), *channel* (+40%) and *customer engagement* (+29%) data have all seen clear uplifts in the proportion of agency clients using them over the past year. This is also true among company respondents, indicating that organizations are using a more diverse array of data for their personalization efforts.

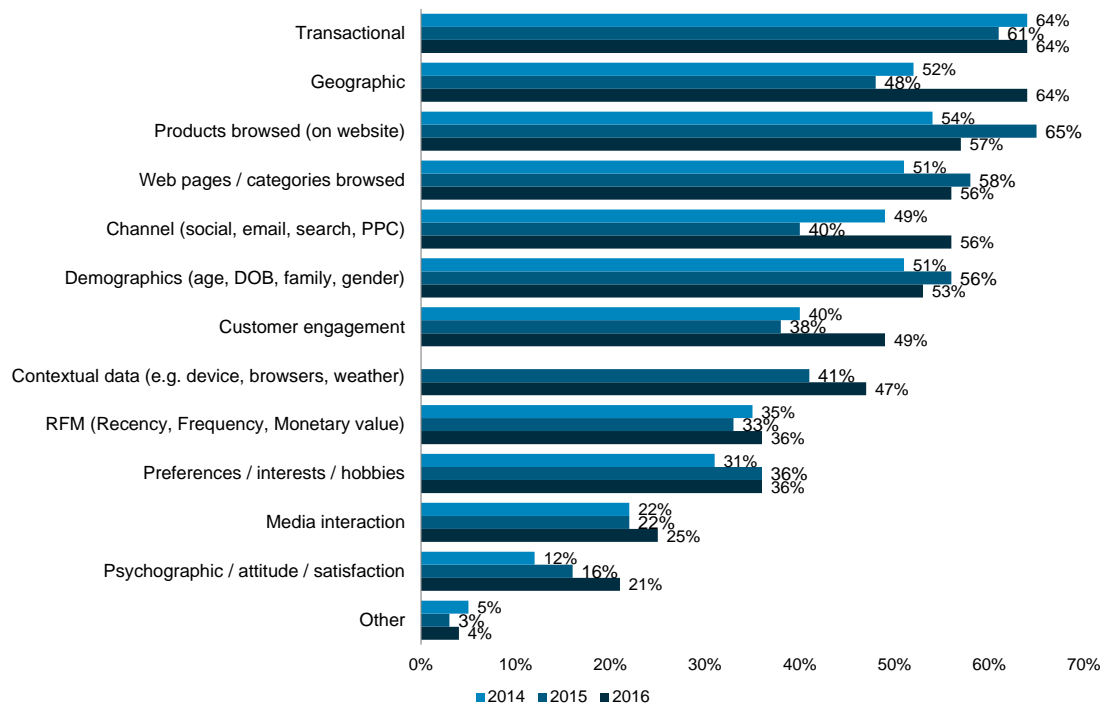
### WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“Data collection in general is a tricky issue for most companies: it needs infrastructure, there are legal implications, most companies are particularly bad at joining together disparate sources of data. It’s good therefore to see that the number of respondents looking at this strategically has risen, albeit it’s still fairly low at just over half.”**

Dan Barker, Independent Consultant

#### Agency respondents

Figure 49: Which of the following data do your clients use to personalize their website content?



Respondents 2016: 75  
Respondents 2015: 81 | 2014: 85

#### 4.8.6. Ideas for website personalization

As with any changes being made to a website, ideas and inspiration are needed to further any action. Companies are using a wide range of sources for inspiration when it comes to personalization, both internally and externally.

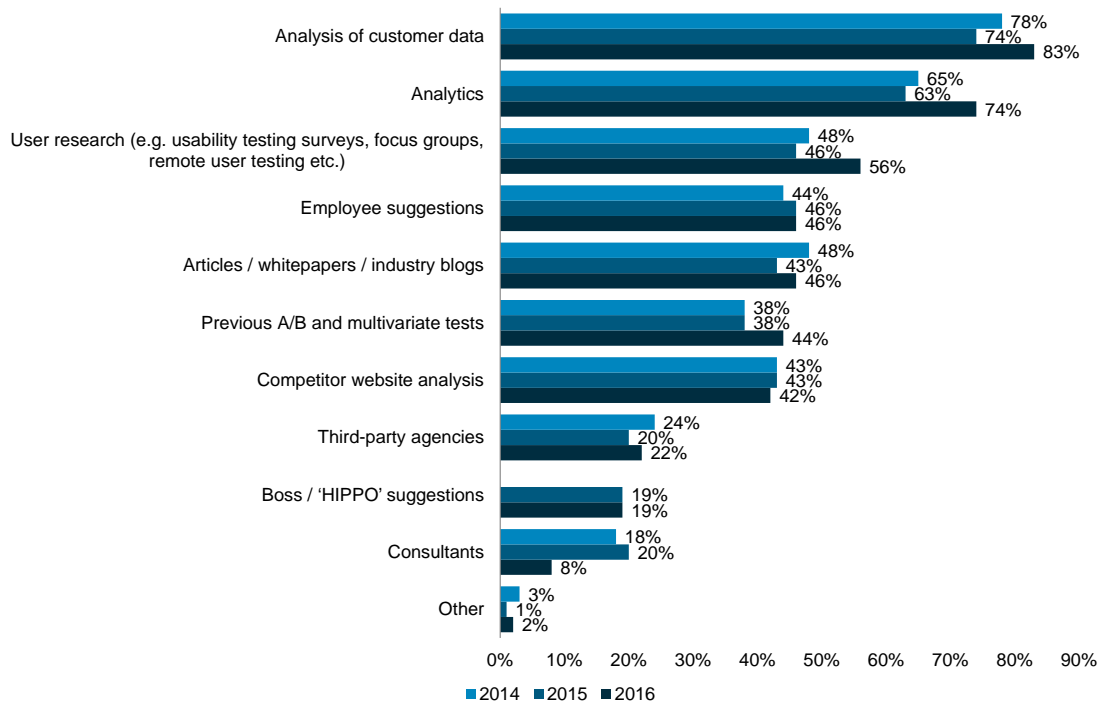
The majority (83%) of company respondents are using *analysis of customer data* as a source for ideas for website personalization, and this has increased by 12% since last year's survey (Figure 50). *Analytics* and *user research* have also seen an increase in popularity (+17% and +22% respectively).

**ANALYSIS OF  
CUSTOMER DATA IS  
THE TOP SOURCE OF  
INSPIRATION FOR WEBSITE  
PERSONALIZATION.**



## Company respondents

Figure 50: Where do you get your ideas for website personalization?



Respondents 2016: 106  
Respondents 2015: 106 | 2014: 112



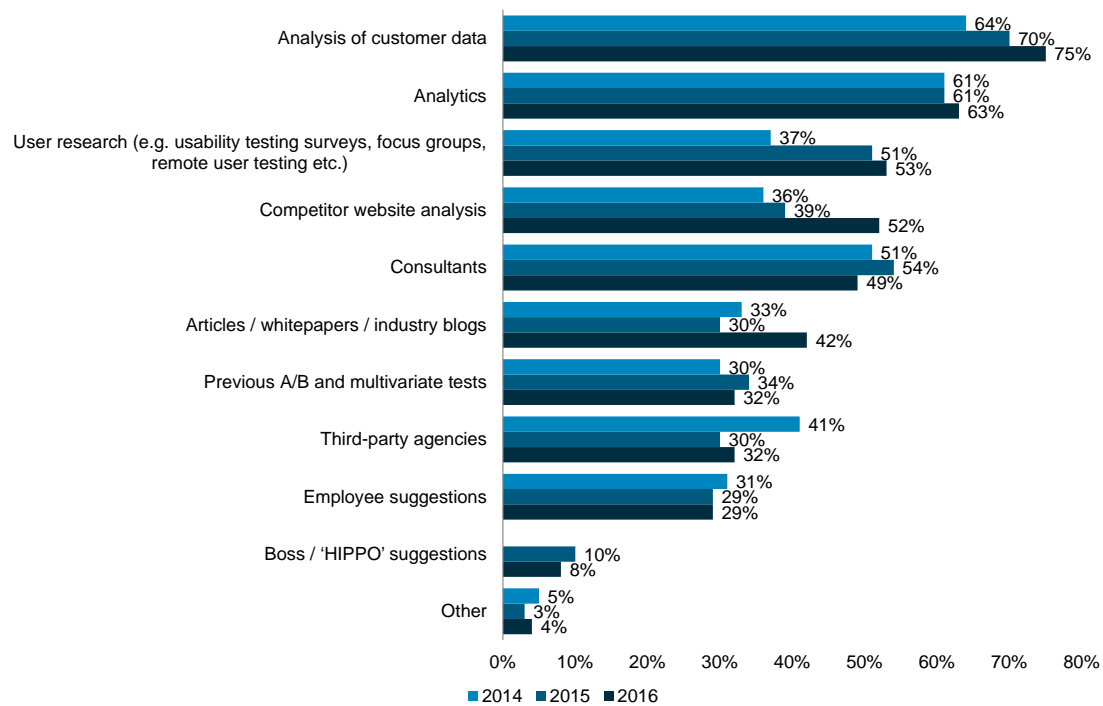
As was the case with testing (Section 4.7.4), *third-party agencies*, *boss / 'HIPPO' suggestions* and *consultants* have the lowest influence when companies are searching for inspiration for testing.

A noticeable difference when looking at the agency responses (Figure 51) is the fact that *consultants* are given higher priority, with agencies being six times more likely to say that their clients turn to consultants (49% of agencies versus 8% of companies).

The top three sources of ideas, however, are the same according to both companies and agencies. The fact that *analysis of customer data* is the top source of inspiration according to both groups is positive, as it means that organizations are starting by looking at what data they actually have access to, and then using this to think about what could be done with it.

## Agency respondents

Figure 51: Where do your clients typically get their ideas for website personalization?



Respondents 2016: 73  
2015: 79 | 2014: 84

### 4.8.7. Technology used for website personalization

Among company respondents, the proportion of those saying that they use an *A/B or multivariate testing tool* to implement website personalization has risen by 31% since 2014, with over three-fifths (63%) now using this technology (Figure 52). This is used by just over half (54%) of agency clients (Figure 53).

Agency respondents were more likely to point to *content management systems* (CMS) as key tools used by clients (61% versus 47% of companies). Among company respondents, these have declined in favour since 2014, with an overall decrease of 24% over the last two years.

The two least popular solutions for companies, *marketing automation systems* and *'off-the-shelf' personalization tools*, are still used by just under a quarter of respondents (24% and 22% respectively), indicating that companies are using a wide range of solutions and finding a combination best suited for their needs. *'Off-the-shelf'* solutions have risen in popularity among agency clients over the last year, with a 42% increase in usage.

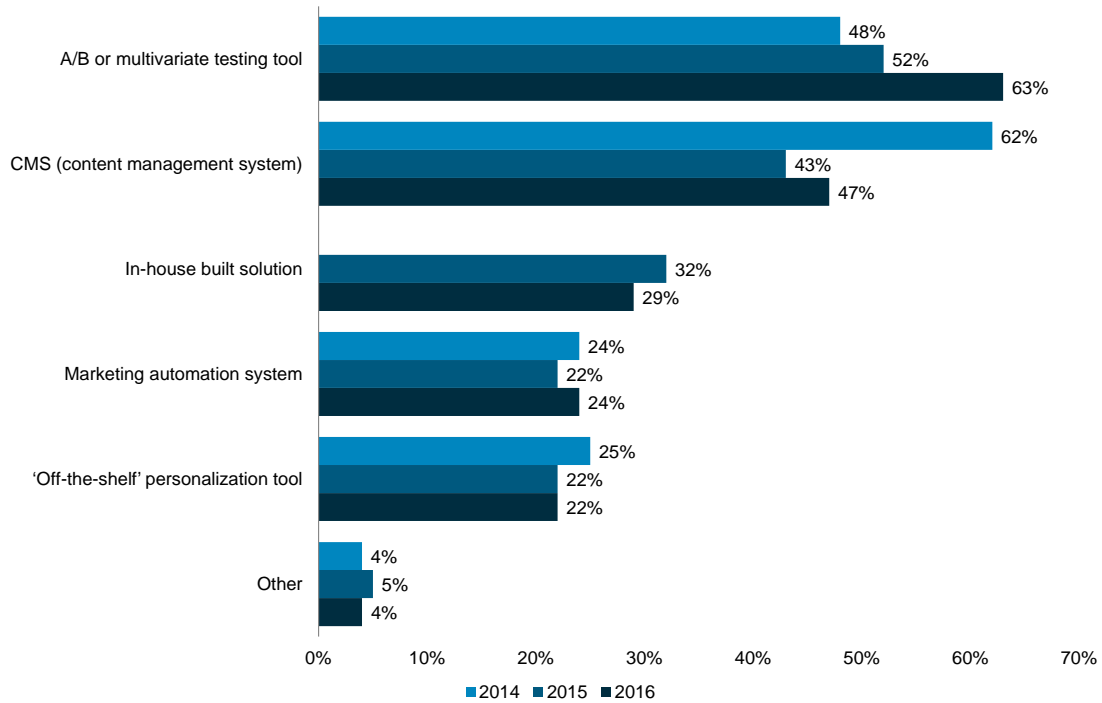
Separate Econsultancy/RedEye research<sup>3</sup> revealed that 20% of companies are using predictive analytics in their personalization efforts, with a further 57% planning to do so in the future. This could add wider variation to the types of tools being used and offer more options for those keen to improve their conversion rates through these processes.

**THE PROPORTION OF COMPANIES USING A/B TESTING TOOLS TO IMPLEMENT WEBSITE PERSONALIZATION HAS INCREASED BY 31% SINCE 2014.**

<sup>3</sup> <https://econsultancy.com/reports/predictive-analytics-report>

### Company respondents

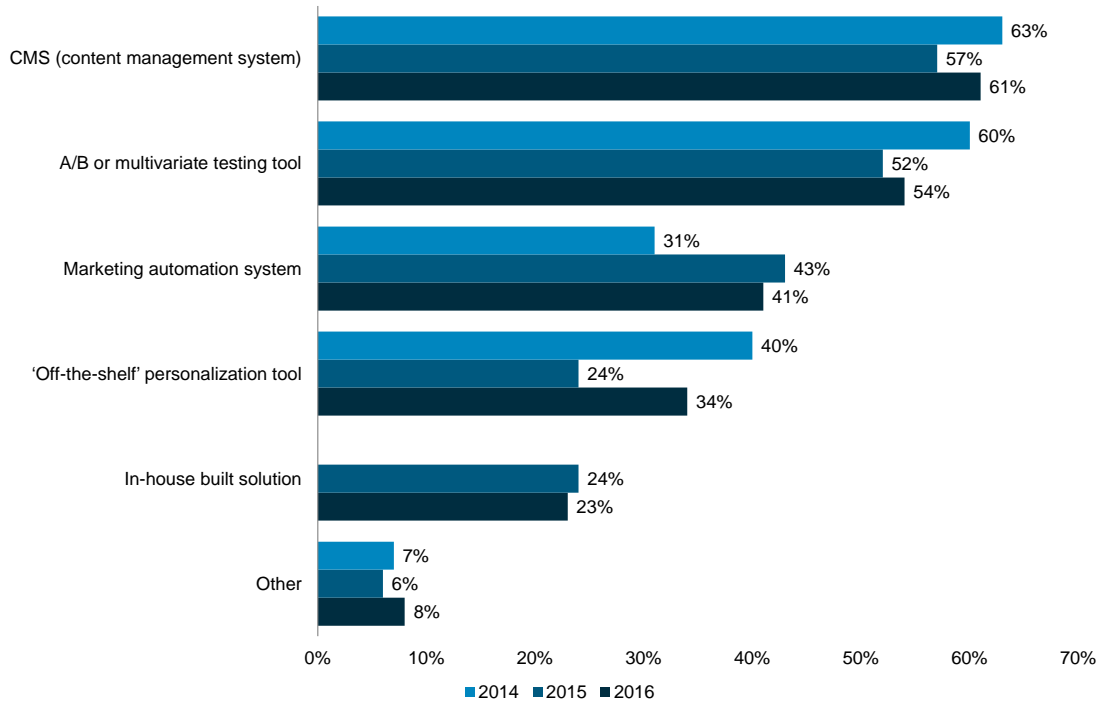
**Figure 52: What technology are you using to implement website personalization?**



Respondents 2016: 102  
2015: 103 | 2014: 106

### Agency respondents

**Figure 53: What technology are your clients using to implement website personalization?**



Respondents 2016: 71  
2015: 79 | 2014: 83





## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“More companies than ever are using their A/B or multivariate testing tools to implement website personalization. This makes a lot of sense. In order to measure the efficacy of a personalization campaign, there must be a control group, or holdback, that do not see the campaign for comparison – this is also a kind of A/B test. A/B testing broader ideas before refining them to personalize for different audiences and segments features in most best-in-class personalization workflows, so doing this all in one platform where you do not need to duplicate work or audiences will save companies a lot of time.”**

Tai Rattigan, Head of Partnerships EMEA, Optimizely

*Email* is the channel which most respondents align with their website personalization, with this being true of 83% of companies and 87% of agency clients. *Search* and *social* are more popular among agency clients (both 46%) than companies (36% and 33% respectively).

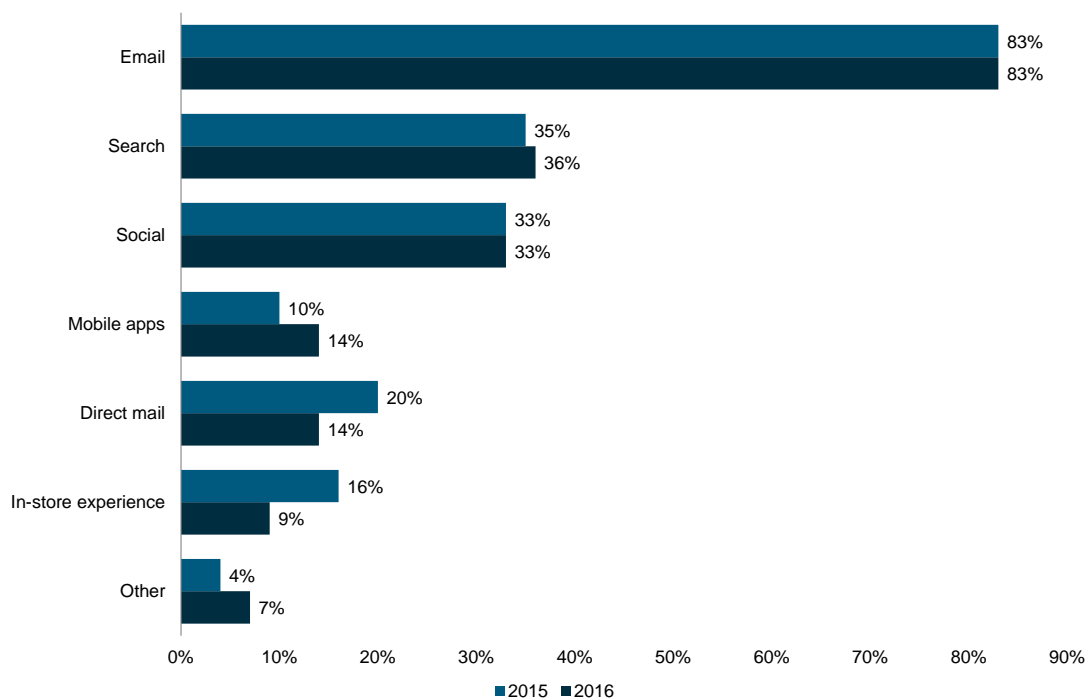
It is possible that agencies are providing the knowledge and resource for their clients to align across a wider range of channels, opening new avenues, while companies may be choosing to focus on their most cost-effective channels that provide the best return.

*Direct mail* has risen in popularity among agency clients, with 27% now aligning this with their website personalization, but among companies this has declined to 14%. *In-store experience* has also seen a decline among companies, whereas agency clients have continued to align with this channel at the same rate as last year.

**EMAIL IS THE CHANNEL WHICH MOST COMPANIES ALIGN WITH THEIR PERSONALIZATION EFFORTS.**

### Company respondents

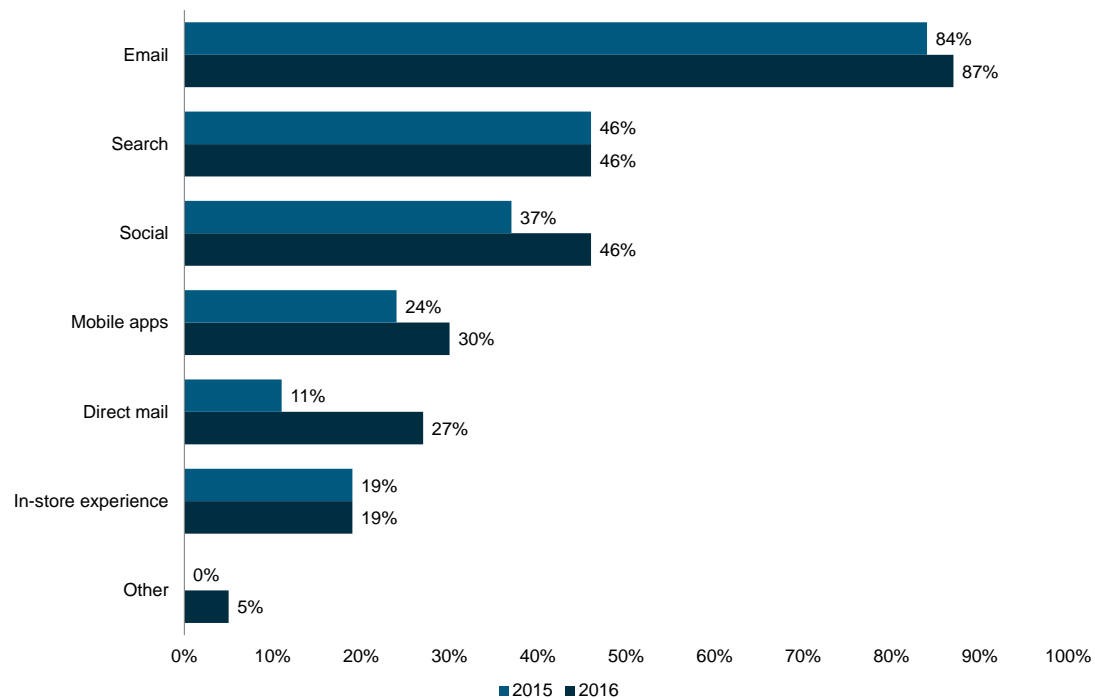
Figure 54: Do you align your website personalization with any of the following channels?



Respondents 2016: 76  
Respondents 2015: 77

## Agency respondents

Figure 55: Do your clients align their website personalization with any of the following channels?



Respondents 2016: 63  
Respondents 2015: 63

## 4.9. Investment, people and processes

### 4.9.1. Budgets for conversion rate optimization

In a new question for this year's report, respondents were asked how they expect their budgets for conversion rate optimization to change over the coming year. Encouragingly, just over half of both company (54%) and agency (53%) respondents said that their organizations' or clients' budgets would see an increase.

Less than 5% of respondents expect to see a decrease in budget allocation for conversion rate optimization over the next 12 months. With a little over two-fifths (43%) stating that budgets will stay the same, there is an indication that organizations feel they have found a suitable level of investment, or certainly achieved a level which is delivering some kind of return.

Separate Econsultancy research<sup>4</sup> revealed that roughly half (52%) of companies were planning to increase their overall marketing budgets in 2016, with 72% stating there would be an increase for digital marketing specifically. These changes are clearly being reflected in plans for conversion

rate optimization budgeting, and show an understanding that investment is needed to derive results from this practice.

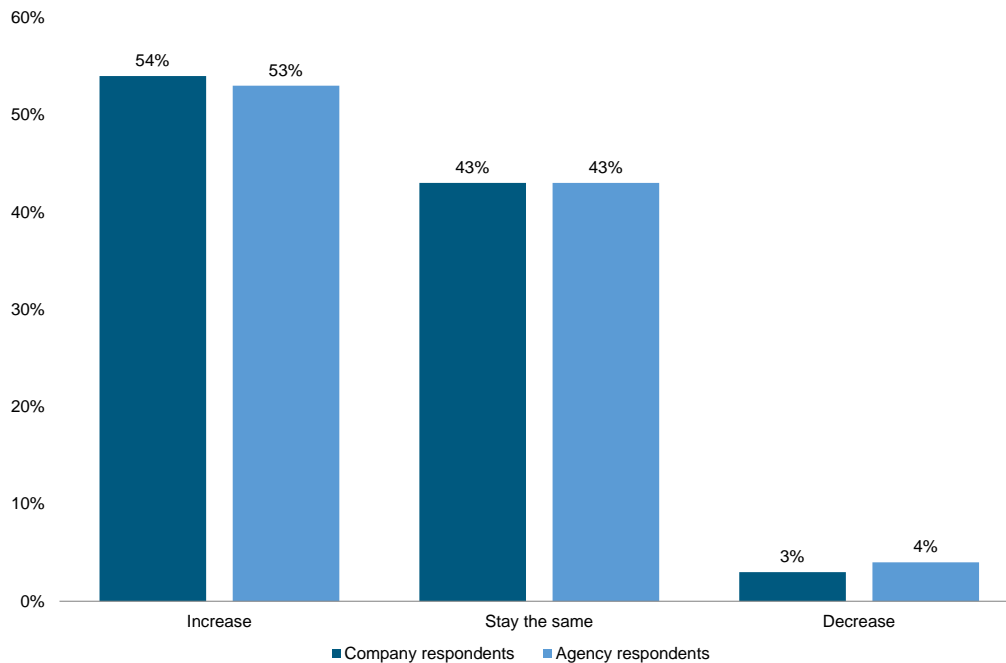
Approximately one in ten (11%) companies expecting budget increases estimated that their budgets would increase by 91-100%, but the majority (72%) predicted increases of up to 30%.

The average increase expected by companies is 29%, while agencies expect their clients to increase budgets by 23% on average. These are healthy figures, and suggest that conversion rate optimization is regarded as valuable. With budgets set to increase by around a quarter or more, organizations will be able to experiment more with their techniques and as such deliver better overall results.

By investing in conversion rate optimization, companies are acknowledging the importance of converting the customers already passing through their website or other marketing channels. Working on techniques to increase conversion rates means that potentially small tweaks get rewards, before having to branch out and trying to market to an entirely new customer base.

<sup>4</sup> <https://econsultancy.com/reports/marketing-budgets>

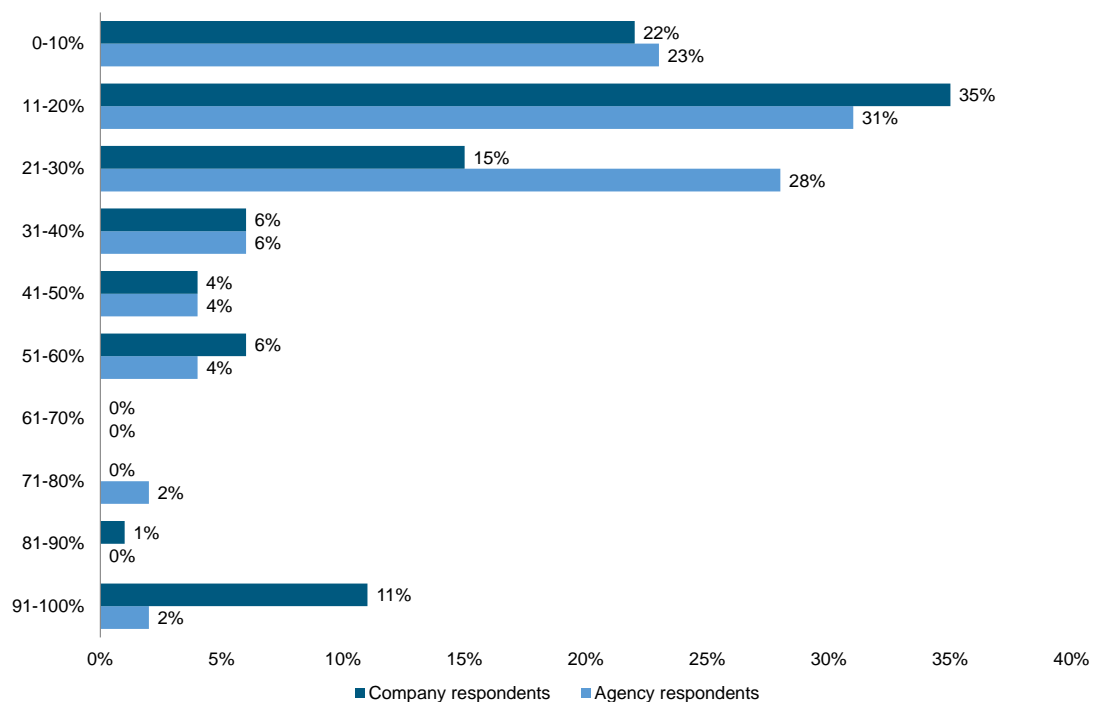
**Figure 56: How will your organization's (or your clients') budget for conversion rate optimization change over the coming year?**



Company respondents: 387  
Agency respondents: 204

Note: This is a new question for the 2016 report, so there is no trend data.

**Figure 57: By how much do you expect your organization's (or your clients') budget for conversion rate optimization to increase?**



Company respondents: 179  
Agency respondents: 96

Note: This is a new question for the 2016 report, so there is no trend data.

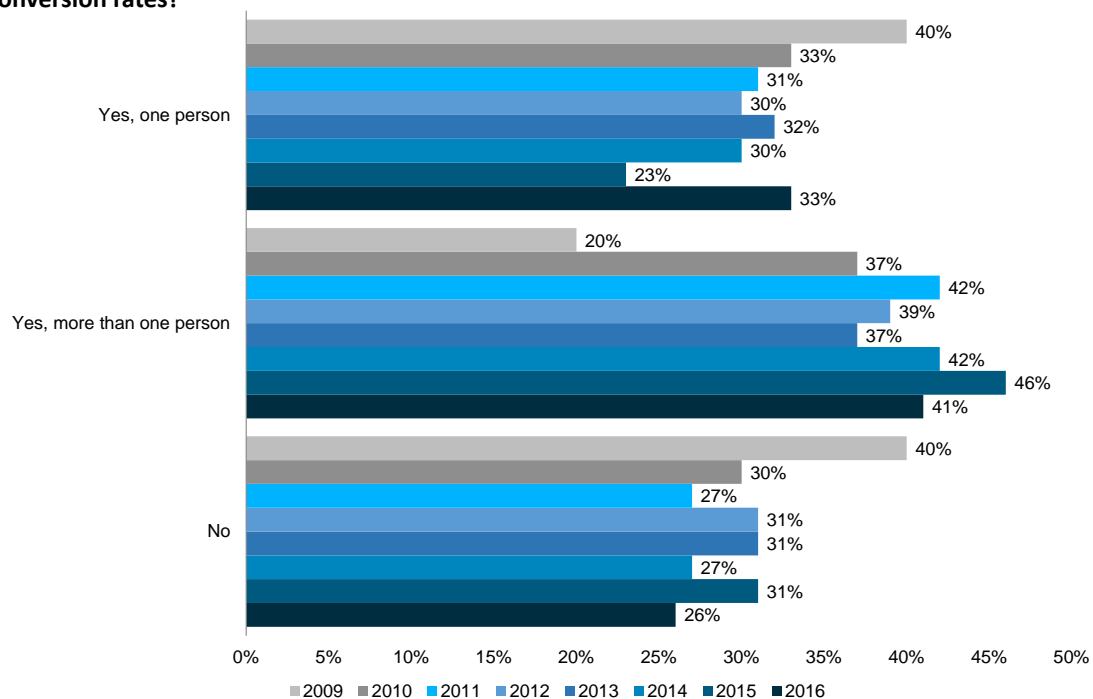
#### 4.9.2. Number of staff responsible for improving conversion rates

Since last year's survey, the proportion of companies with no-one in their organization directly responsible for improving conversion rates has decreased by 16%. There has also been a 43% increase in the proportion of companies with one person in-house, which at 33% now matches the 2010 figure.

Just over two-fifths (41%, down by 11% since 2015) of companies have more than one person internally who is directly responsible for improving conversion rates. Having a number of people accountable for these processes means that CRO is seen as an integral part of the company strategy, and that efforts will not or should not slip.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 58: Do you have anyone in your organization who is directly responsible for improving conversion rates?**



Respondents 2016: 387 | 2015: 375  
Respondents 2014: 457 | 2013: 316 | 2012: 334 | 2011: 304 | 2010: 283 | 2009: 272

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“Recruitment of well-trained, experienced conversion rate optimization professionals remains a barrier to improving conversion rates. The growing trend of training grads from science and engineering backgrounds, well versed in measurement and controlled testing, will prove dividends for the savvy businesses taking CRO as a serious revenue-driving mechanic.”**

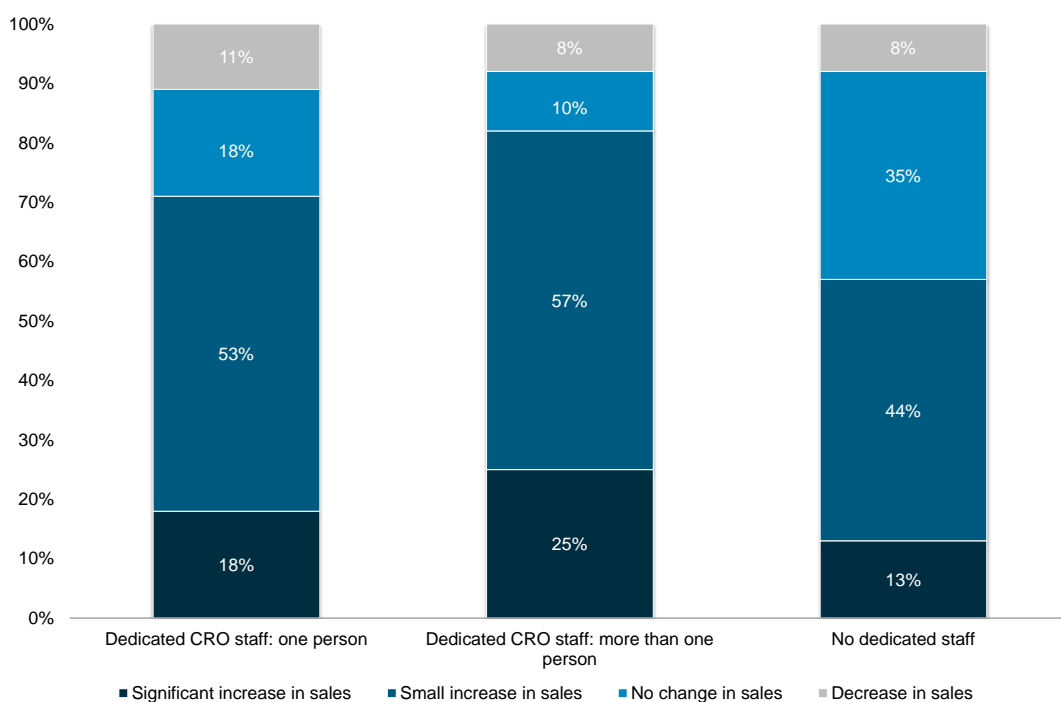
Depesh Mandalia, CMO, toucanBox

As was the case last year, *Figure 59* indicates that as improving conversion becomes more complex, more dedicated staff are needed to improve sales. The vast majority (82%) of companies who had more than one person directly responsible for improving conversion rates reported an increase in sales, with a quarter of these reporting a 'significant increase'. This compares to only 10% of companies who've seen no change in sales over the previous months.

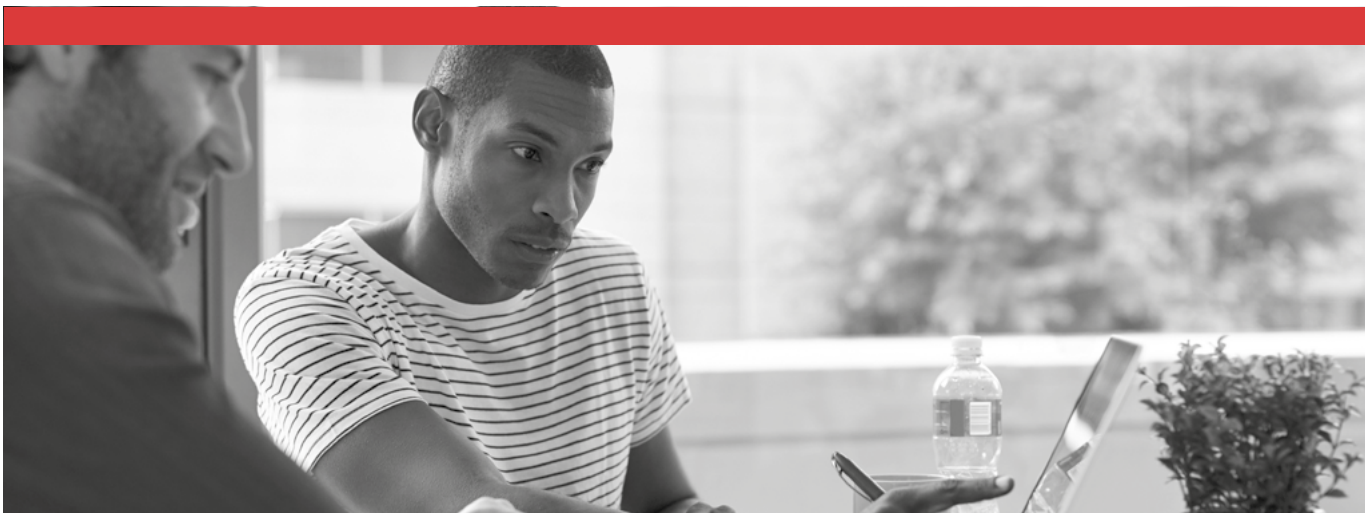
Further analysis of the data revealed that of companies that have seen an increase in sales, 79% said that they have one or more people responsible for improving conversion rates.

#### Company respondents (cross-tabulation)

**Figure 59: Dedicated staff and reported changes in sales**



Respondents: 368



### 4.9.3. Perceived control over conversion rates

Although the proportion of companies who feel they have no control at all over conversion rates is very small (2%), around a third of companies (35%, up from 33% in 2015) still feel they have 'very little control'. This proportion has remained relatively consistent since 2009 (apart from a couple of years of lower confidence).

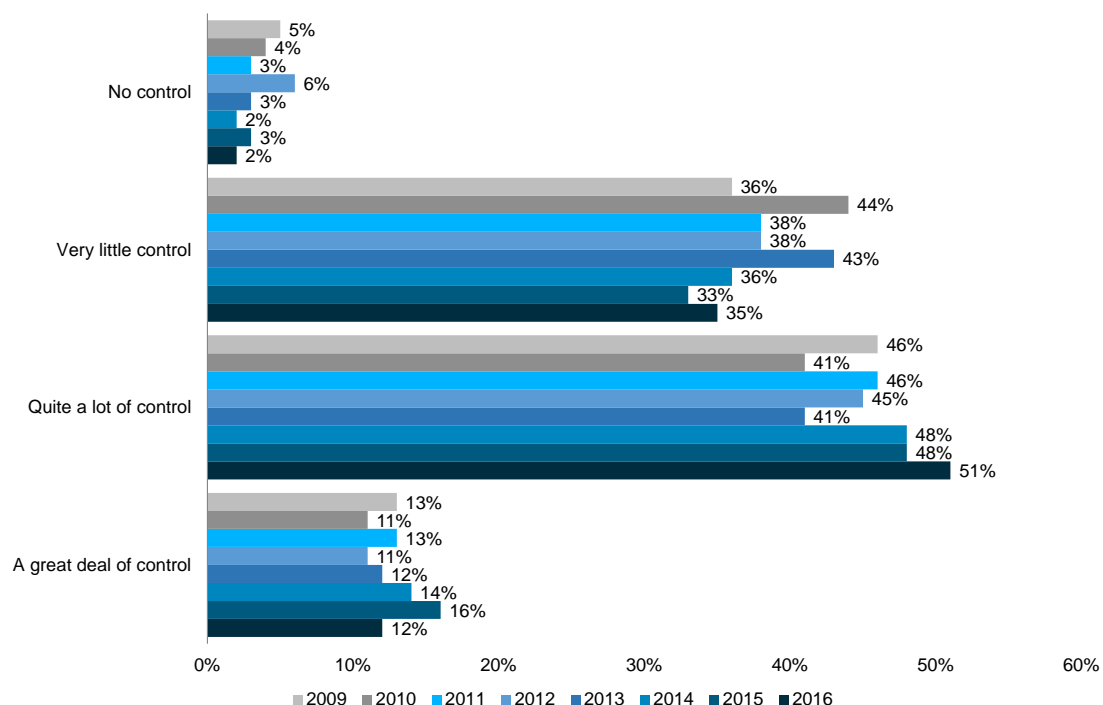
While it's encouraging to see that nearly two-thirds (63%) of organizations feel they have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal of' control over their conversion rates, there is plenty of room for further improvement.

Figure 61 shows that nearly three-quarters (72%) of companies who reported a significant increase in sales have 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of control over their conversions, compared to just 52% of companies who have seen no change in sales.



### Company respondents

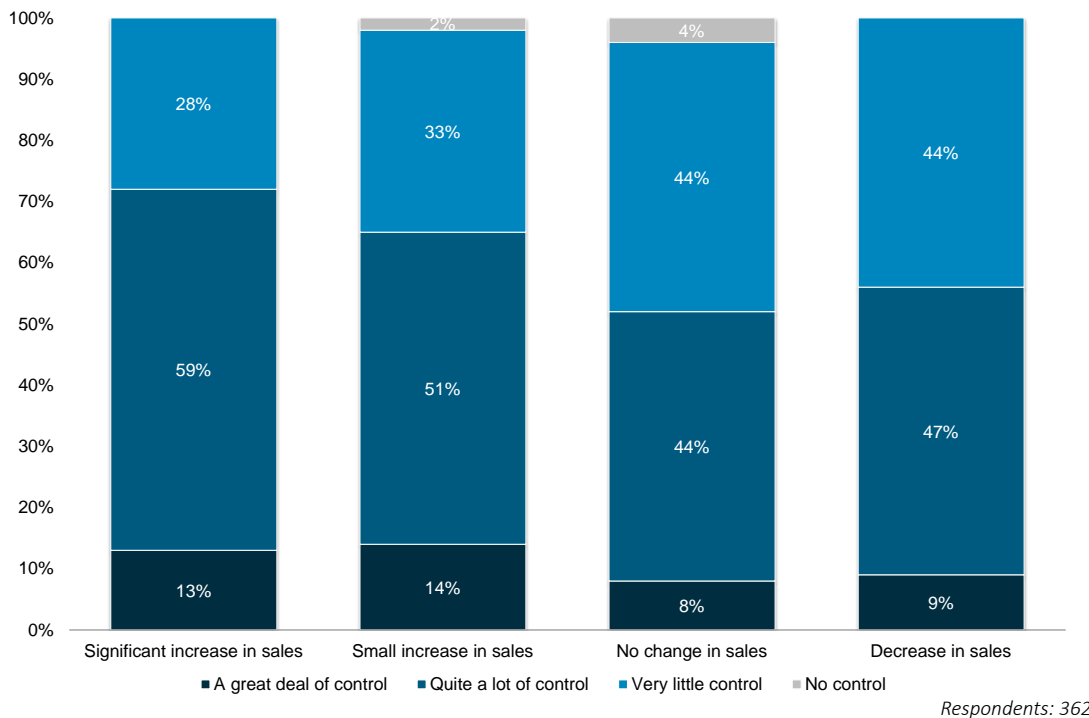
Figure 60: How much control do you feel your organization has over conversion rates?



Respondents 2016: 380 | 2015: 374  
 Respondents 2014: 457 | 2013: 318 | 2012: 333 | 2011: 304 | 2010: 284 | 2009: 273

## Company respondents (cross-tabulation)

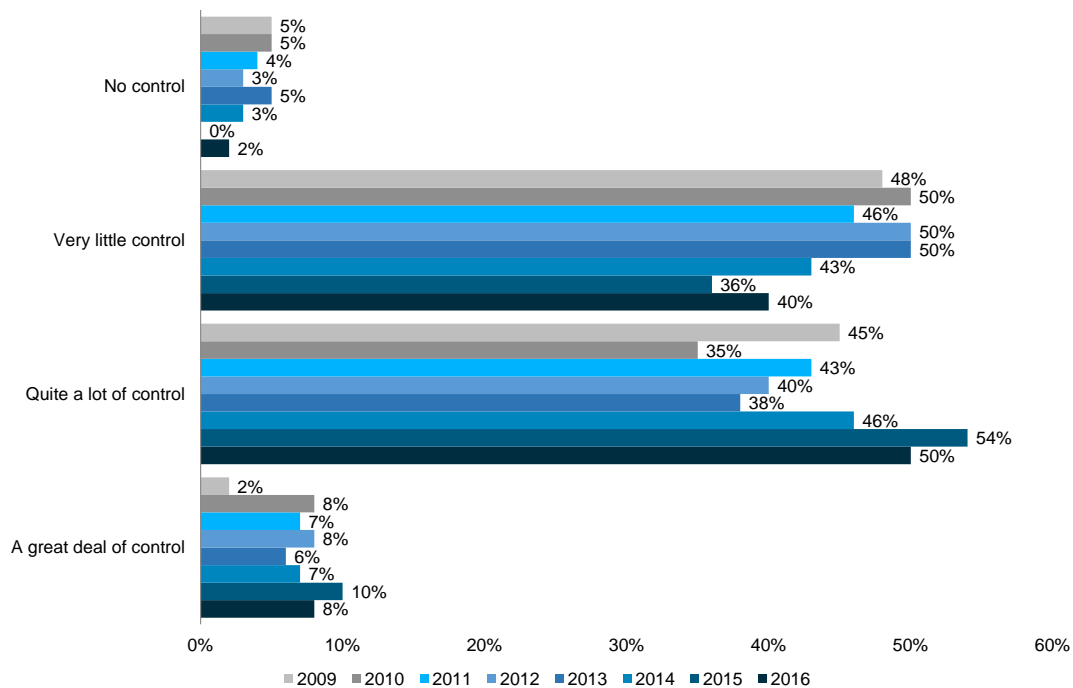
Figure 61: Organizational control over conversion rates and reported changes in sales



Agencies are more likely to say that their clients have 'very little control' over their conversion rates (40% compared to 35% of companies). Additionally, the proportion of those claiming that their clients have 'quite a lot' or 'a great deal of' control has declined by 9% since 2015.

## Agency respondents

Figure 62: How much control do you feel your clients have over conversion rates?



Respondents 2016: 203 | 2015: 222  
Respondents 2014: 301 | 2013: 260 | 2012: 242 | 2011: 243 | 2010: 208 | 2009: 215



#### 4.9.4. Incentives based on conversion rates

Incentivization is a topic we have been exploring since 2009, and respondents' position has changed little since then. Over this eight-year period, there has been a 5% increase in the proportion of companies who do not incentivize staff based on improving conversion rates.

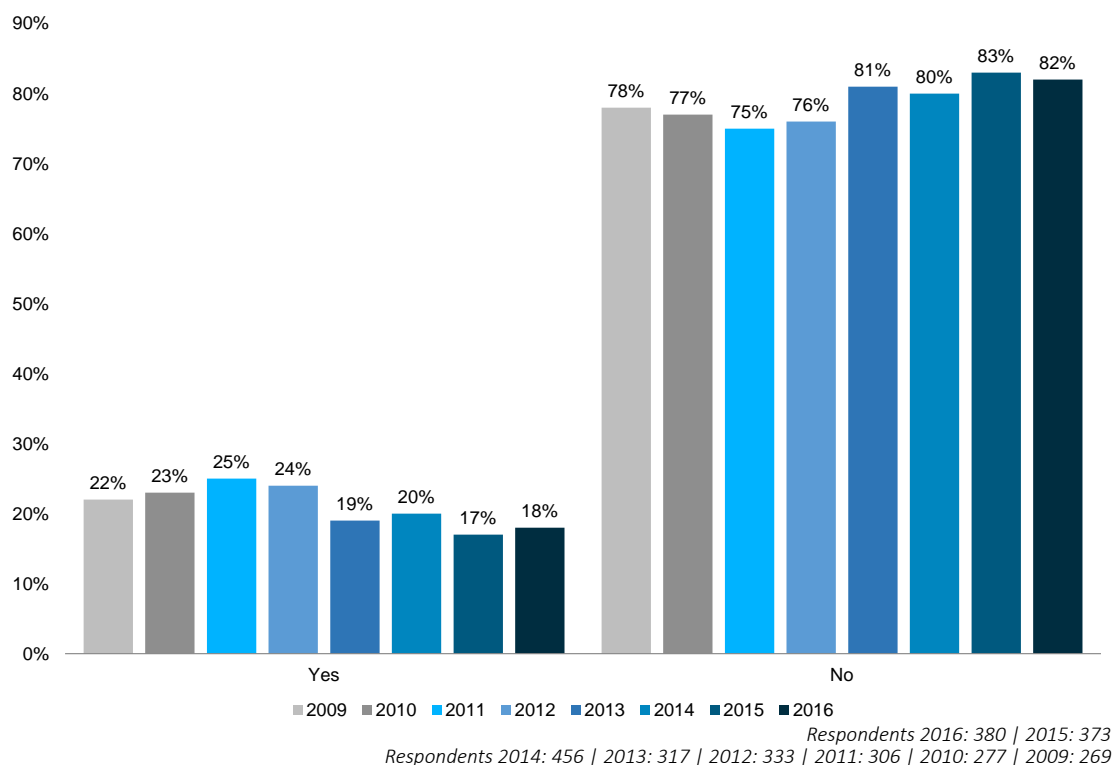
Over four-fifths (82%) of companies choose not to incentivize staff based on conversion rates, potentially because it is such a crucial element of any strategy now that it is incorporated as part of a job role. With so many processes contributing to conversion rate optimization across channels, it could be a minefield to decide who was to be rewarded and with what.

Responses from agencies reflect those of companies, with four-fifths (81%) saying that their clients are not incentivizing staff based on improving conversion rates (*Figure 65*).

Further analysis of the data showed that, of companies seeing a significant increase in sales, almost a quarter (23%) were incentivizing staff based on improved conversion rates (*Figure 64*). Among those seeing no change in sales, only 10% were incentivizing staff.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 63: Does your organization incentivize staff based on improving conversion rates?**



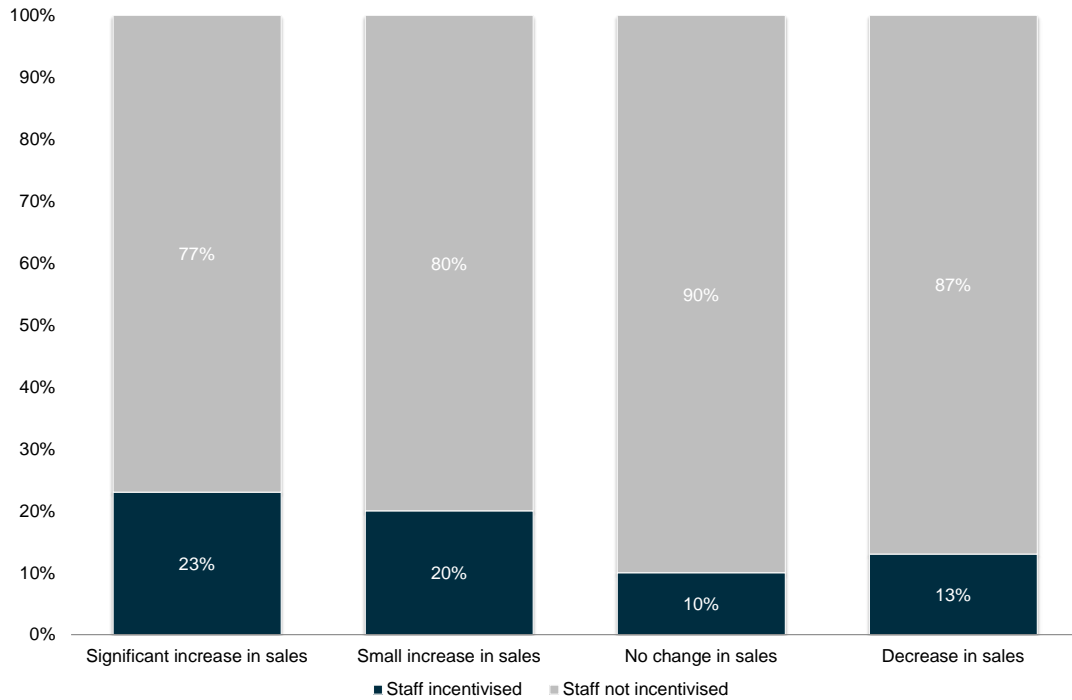
## “ WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

“It’s interesting how most salespeople get incentives, but conversion people – who have the ability to increase sales permanently – tend not to.”

Ben Jesson, CEO, Conversion Rate Experts

### Company respondents (cross-tabulation)

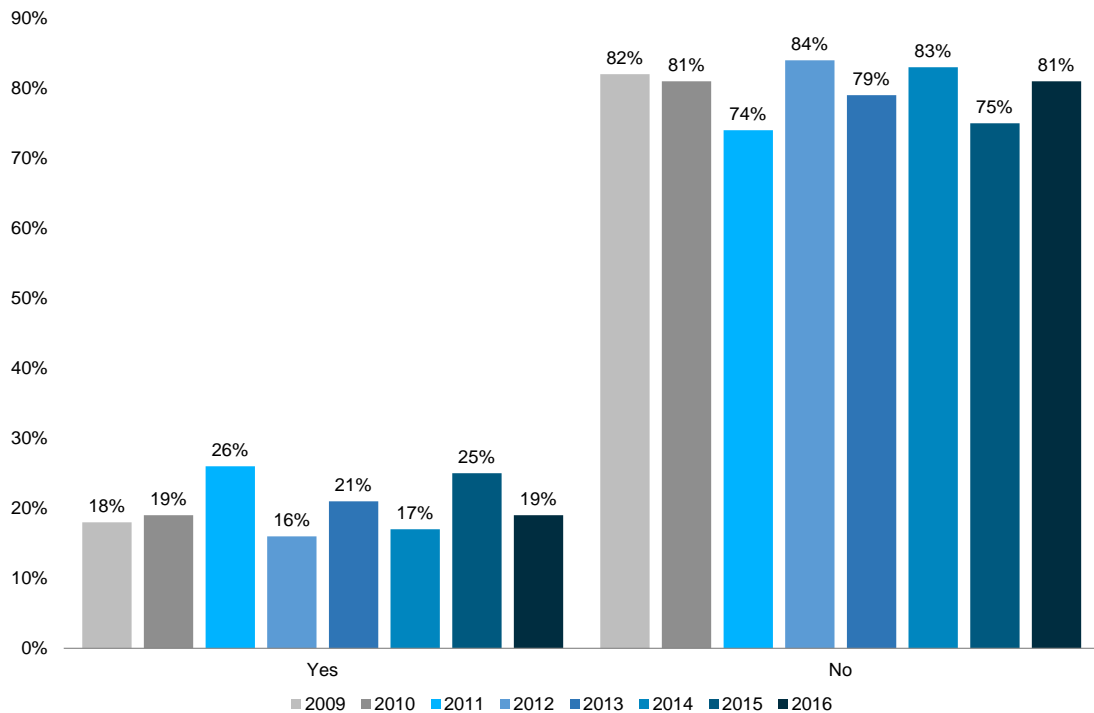
**Figure 64: Staff incentivization and reported changes in sales**



Respondents: 361

### Agency respondents

**Figure 65: Typically, do your clients incentivize staff based on improving conversion rates?**



Respondents 2016: 204 | 2015: 222  
Respondents 2014: 301 | 2013: 262 | 2012: 242 | 2011: 244 | 2010: 207 | 2009: 214

#### 4.9.5. Approach to improving conversion rates

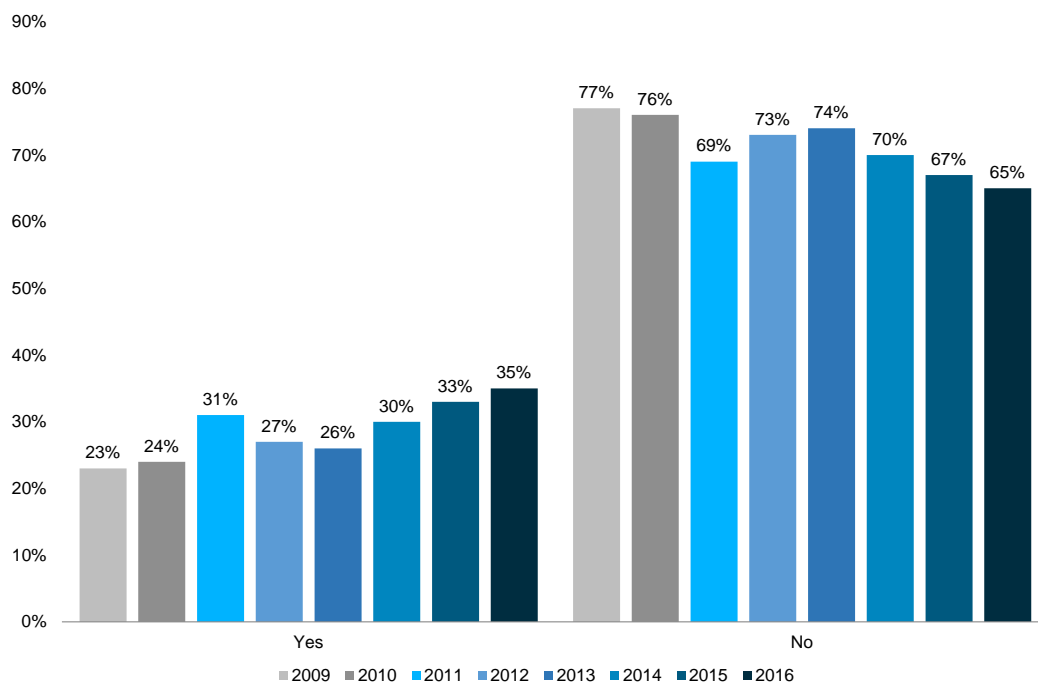
The proportion of companies with a structured approach to improving conversion rates has been growing steadily, with just over a third (35%, up from 33% in 2015) of respondents saying that's the case (*Figure 66*). This increase points to a growing awareness of the need to incorporate the practices into wider business goals. Without a strategy and clear goals, conversion rate optimization can be overwhelming due to the range of channels and processes available.

According to separate Econsultancy research<sup>5</sup>, 59% of companies are using a measurement framework for their overall analytics strategy, leaving 41% without one. It seems to follow, then, that a smaller proportion than this would have broken down these further to create structured frameworks for processes such as conversion rate optimization. There is still a journey to be taken when it comes to making data an integral part of company culture, and the large proportion of those who do not yet have a clear structure in these areas shows this.

Further analysis revealed that, of companies seeing a significant increase in sales, more than half (52%) had adopted a structured approach to improving conversion rates (*Figure 67*). Of those seeing a small increase in sales, almost two-fifths (36%) were also operating within a structured plan.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 66: Does your organization have a structured approach to improving conversion rates?**



Respondents 2016: 380 | 2015: 370  
Respondents 2014: 447 | 2013: 314 | 2012: 326 | 2011: 304 | 2010: 283 | 2009: 270



#### WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

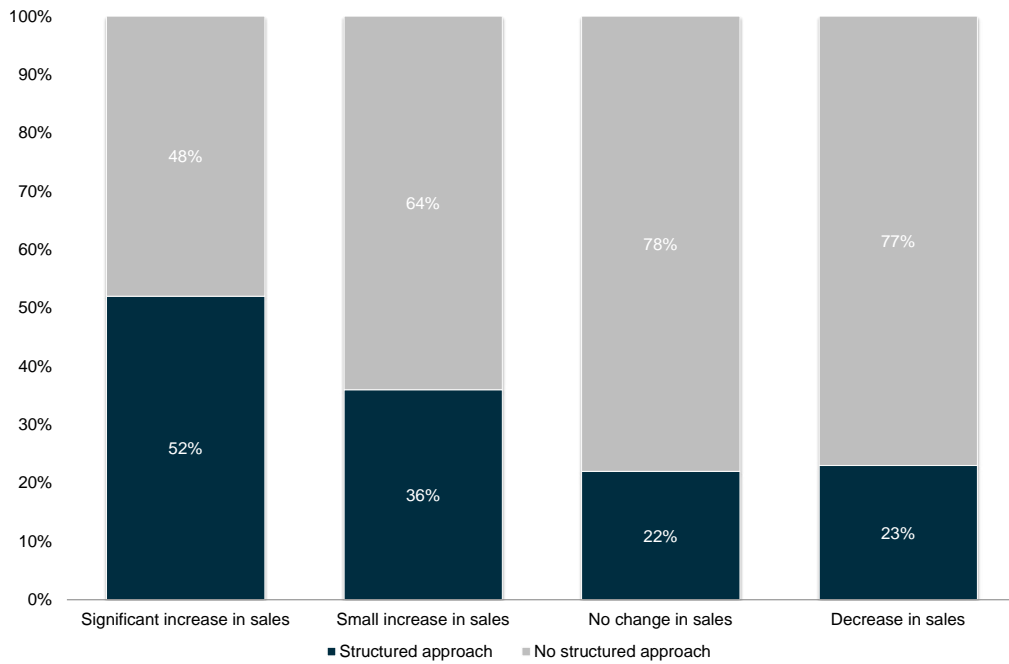
**“Like any management discipline, CRO requires proper methods and structures. Ad-hoc initiatives are better than doing nothing, but what truly differentiates mature organizations is a structured approach to understanding visitor hesitations, fears and pain points that result in the best optimization ideas and opportunities.”**

Paras Chopra, Founder, Wingify

<sup>5</sup> <https://econsultancy.com/reports/measurement-and-analytics-report>

### Company respondents (cross-tabulation)

Figure 67: Structured approach and reported changes in sales



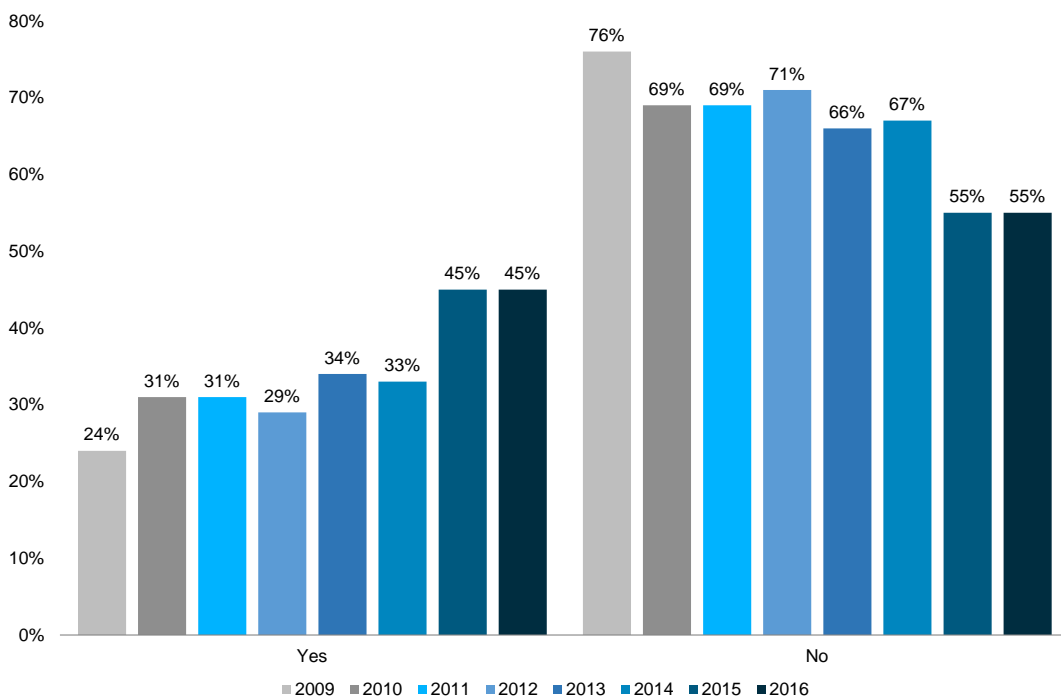
Respondents: 361

Agencies report that their clients are further ahead in terms of adopting a structured approach to conversion rate optimization, with 45% saying these plans are in place (Figure 68). This has remained at the same level as last year, but has seen an increase of 88% since 2009.

Without a structured approach, the rest of the optimization process is a difficult one. As with any business process, clear goals allow consistency and a single vision that all employees can work toward.

### Agency respondents

Figure 68: Do your clients adopt a structured approach to improving conversion rates?



Respondents 2016: 201 | 2015: 218  
Respondents 2014: 296 | 2013: 259 | 2012: 238 | 2011: 238 | 2010: 207 | 2009: 214

#### 4.9.6. Barriers to improving conversion rates

Ever since 2009, 'lack of resources' has been consistently ranked as the most significant barrier to improving conversion rates and this year is no exception. Additionally, the proportion of those saying that's the case increased by 16% since last year. 'Lack of budget' is the second most commonly cited barrier, with just under a third (32%) mentioning it.

Separate Econsultancy research has echoed these concerns, with 43% of marketers saying they have a restricted budget for all areas of marketing, and 34% lacking the number of staff needed to make desired changes.<sup>6</sup>

Compared to last year, there has been a 33% increase in the proportion of companies citing 'poor technology' as a barrier to conversion rates for their organization. This could be due to the difficulties of incorporating legacy systems into

new processes and techniques, or indicate that companies are struggling to keep up with the new developments in technologies.

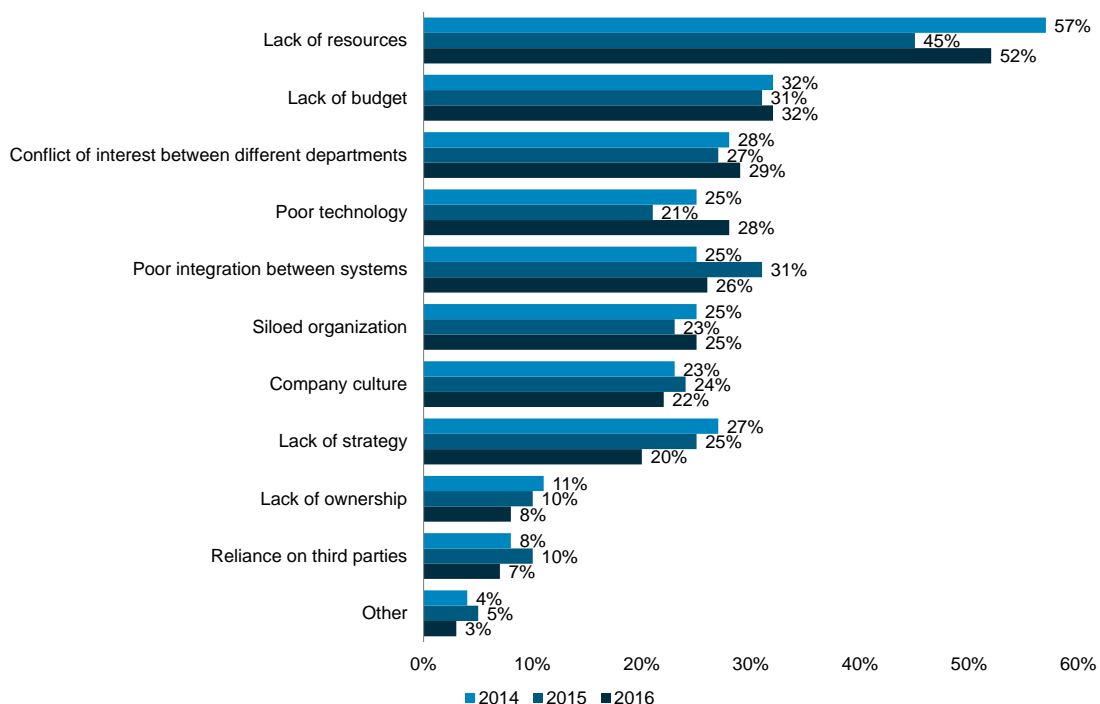
Encouragingly, 'poor integration between systems' and 'lack of strategy' are viewed as significant barriers by fewer respondents (-16% and -20% respectively), indicating that strategy and planning are slowly becoming a more recognized part of the process.

For agency clients, too, 'lack of budget' is a major barrier (cited by 47%), with a 'lack of resources' an issue for 33% of respondents.

The issue of a 'siloe organization' is seen to be a problem by 40% of agencies, but only 25% of companies claim it's an issue for them. An agency looking into a client organization may perceive there to be structural issues which have not yet been recognized or considered internally.

#### Company respondents

**Figure 69: What are the biggest barriers preventing your organization from improving conversion rates?**

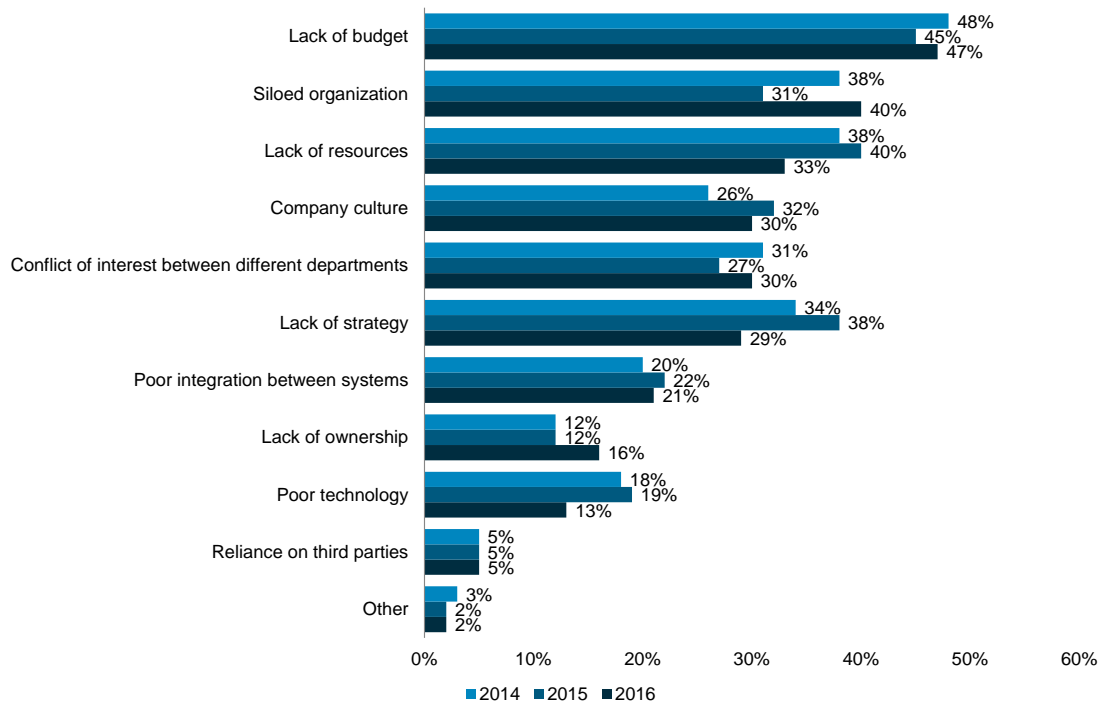


Respondents 2016: 374  
Respondents 2015: 367 | 2014: 446

<sup>6</sup> <https://econsultancy.com/reports/marketing-budgets>

## Agency respondents

Figure 70: What are the biggest barriers preventing your clients from improving conversion rates?



Respondents 2016: 192  
2015: 220 | 2014: 298

### 4.9.7. What would make the biggest difference to conversion rates?

A lack of budget, resources and comprehensive strategy emerged as key themes for the majority of survey respondents when asked about what would make the biggest difference in improving conversion rates (Figure 71).

Although both company and agency respondents mentioned that testing (either A/B or multivariate) is one of the most effective methods driving success for CRO programmes, getting buy-in for

investment in testing programmes and having a clear focus often prove challenging.

Another key issue hindering progress is related to data, namely data consolidation and dissemination. Although integrated data is the foundation of a successful testing programmes, in many organizations data is so difficult to collate and analyse that acting upon any insights is still a pipe dream.

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

**“There is no single improvement idea that works for everyone. Companies need to adopt a strategy of rigorous, ongoing research and testing to continually improve their conversion rate. Essentially, CRO is continually solving for the customer experience.”**

Paras Chopra, Founder, Wingify

## SURVEY RESPONDENTS



**What do you think would make the biggest difference to your company (or your clients) in improving conversion rates?**

“Guidance and training for those implementing these changes. Without this you’re basically shooting at a bull’s-eye in the dark.”

“Having an organization-wide strategy with clear, sensible KPIs and reliable reporting of online and offline activity, with a focus on improving our internal understanding of customers and how to make all channels work together to push customers down the same funnel.”

“Having the budget and programming resource to implement changes quickly and run A/B tests. Less top-down strategy and HIPPOs deciding what areas to focus on.”

“Listen to what data shows us within one area to inform other areas. Give more data on key things such as cart abandonment – nothing about what’s abandoned and by whom is available to teams that could use the information to inform CRO ideas.”

“More strategic and cultural appreciation of CRO, more freedom and direction for analysts to focus on this, more empowerment given to analysts to action changes, improvements and testing.”

“We’ve overcome the budget constraints (though headcount is still a challenge), but today our biggest headache is getting systems to integrate enough to automate testing / personalization beyond a single point in the user journey.”

“Allowing a more flexible budget for testing; rather than having a fixed amount of hours to be used each month, have a six-month reserve of hours wherein some months draw more and others less to keep testing going and prevent ‘full stops’ when hours are exhausted.”

“Getting an entire organization on the same page regarding the importance of CRO and potential results.”

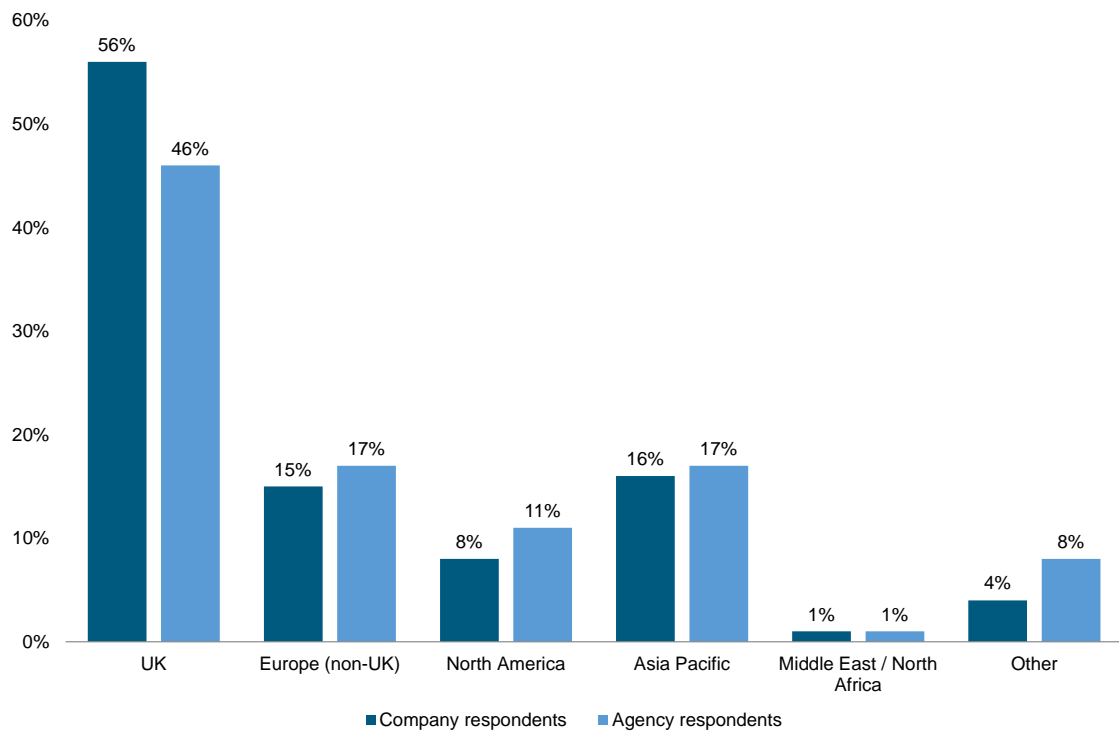
“A large proportion of our marketing budget has been allocated to a full CRO discovery piece combining analytics, customer surveys, user testing and tech audits to make key recommendations for change. However, this work has been wasted as our tech team has not been available to make required changes and we’ve hit a product bottleneck. Having control or influence over the resources required to undertake critical CRO work would make the biggest difference to us.”





## 5. APPENDIX: RESPONDENT PROFILES

Figure 72: In which country / region are you (personally) based?

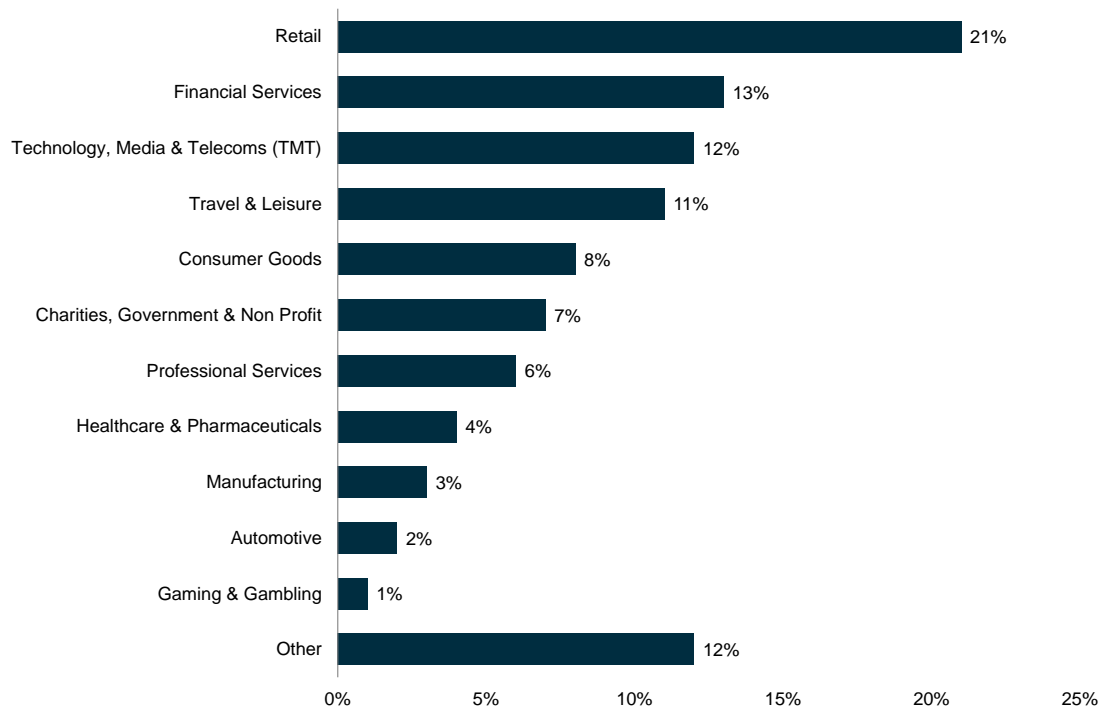


Company respondents: 388  
Agency respondents: 206



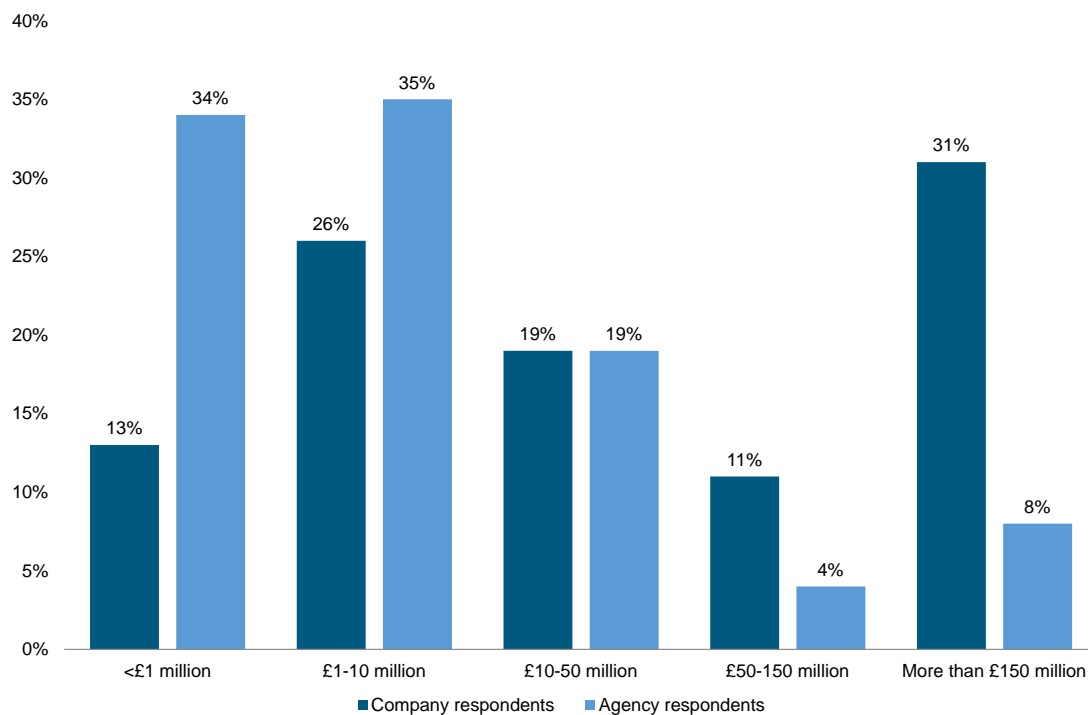
## Company respondents

**Figure 73: In which business sector is your organization?**



Respondents: 388

**Figure 74: What is your annual company turnover?**



Company respondents: 383  
Agency respondents: 198

## About Econsultancy

Econsultancy's mission is to help its customers achieve excellence in digital business, marketing and ecommerce through research, training and events.

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RedEye provide complete technology solutions to digital marketers to allow them to deliver multichannel marketing automation solutions for CRM programmes that increase revenue, return on investment and conversion.

RedEye pride themselves on providing tailored marketing automation, multichannel marketing, email marketing and behavioural marketing solutions. RedEye are also market leaders in website personalisation. RedEye's solutions are driven by a unique database that combines all customer data, online and offline, from store purchases to products browsed, and makes this vast depth and breadth of data available to users through sophisticated and intuitive tools and interfaces.

Since 1997 RedEye have been developing technological solutions for web analysts, email marketers and now multichannel and customer experience marketing practitioners. RedEye are also proud to be a five-times winner for best use of email, as well as receiving awards for Supplier of the Year, but most of all delighted that their technology enables their clients to completely fulfil their digital marketing needs.

RedEye clients include Radley, Interflora, Avis, Monarch, ASOS, M&S, Hotel Chocolat, esure, PayPlan, Sainsbury's Bank, Gala Coral and William Hill.

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